HER FATHER'S SHARE

EDITH M. POWER



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HER FATHER'S SHARE



"Molly took the scrap of paper and unfolded it."
—*Page 92.*

HER FATHER'S SHARE

A NOVEL

BY

EDITH M. POWER

WITH THREE ILLUSTRATIONS



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A MARIA DAS DÔRES
SANDADES

E. M. P.

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HER FATHER'S SHARE

CHAPTER I

THE LETTER

"'EXCELLENTISSIMA Senhora Donna Maria Margarida Moura de Vasconcellos Alvarenga!' Sure, there's no one like that living here at all, at all!"

The postboy stood irresolute, staring from the thin foreign letter with its bright blue stamp to the girl who stood just inside the porch, eagerly looking through the rest of the bundle he had just brought.

"But the address is in it all the same," he went on, "or at least part of it: 'Casa de Rathmor, Kilmacud, County Kilkenny, Irlanda.' A queer mixture altogether, and the stamp one I never remember to have seen before."

His eyes wandered over the front of the house as if he half expected some strange foreign face to appear at one of the small windows framed in the ivy which covered it from foundation to roof, and then back

to the girl, who raised her head from her letters.

"What is that you are saying, Larry?" she asked. "Maria Margarida, and a Portuguese stamp. Why it must be from—oh, yes, Larry, she lives here."

Larry's bright blue eyes opened a little wider in his freckled face.

"Well, then, Miss Mollie, it is the first I have heard of it, and yet I do be getting most of the news of them that come to Kilmacud from my brother at the railway station."

"Ah, I've no doubt you're a sad gossip, Larry," rejoined the girl, taking the letter from him, "and there are few things doing in the neighborhood that you do not know all about. All the same, Maria Margarida has been living here some time, and hopes to go on living here a while longer. Larry, if you stand there staring any longer you will lose the post, and there is a most important card of mine in the bag I have just given you."

Larry started, put a hand to his cap, and turned briskly away, though from the fact

that he twice stopped short in the drive and stood staring back at the house, the girl gathered that the problem still exercised his mind.

"Poor Maria Margarida!" she said to herself, as she moved across the hall toward the sitting-room. "I wonder how much of your future is bound up in this bit of paper, the third letter which I have ever received from my grandmother. The first sent me away from here to the convent in Dublin, the second whisked me off from there to the one in Paris, and now the third——"

"The third what, dear child?" said a voice from the big armchair beside the hearth. "Is it letters you are talking about?"

"A letter, grandfather, a Portuguese letter from my grandmother. I know the writing, though it is shakier than it used to be."

"Ay, ay, we none of us grow younger, Mollie. And what does she say?"

"Oh, do you think I have the courage to open it like that, grandfather? I have a feeling, a prophetic feeling, that it is going to upset our lives in some way."

"Well, child, when the cup's got a tasteless liquid at best, it is none the worse for a little upsetting. Life has been dull enough for you the past months in this lonely place out at the back of beyond, and now since the rheumatism has me fast in its clutches, stopping even our daily rides together, and these autumn mists come down like wet blankets day after day——"

But the girl interruped him with a merry laugh.

"It does not look very cheerful, certainly," she said, as she followed his look out of the window. A fitful gleam of sunshine slipping between two ragged clouds shone for a moment on the soaked lawn with its row of inky yews, and the flowerbeds in which a few drenched Michaelmas daisies still tried to make a show. Beyond the green-stained stone balustrade half a dozen little satiny black Kerry cows browsed philosophically in the long meadow which sloped down to the poplar-fringed brook, beyond which again the ground rose in a long, straight ridge, so straight that the eye grew tired of the mo-

notonous greenish line against the gray sky. Mollie laughed again, a merry, light-hearted laugh.

"No, it does not look very cheerful," she repeated. "But I love it all, the wet hedges and the mossy lanes, and the bog down there with its rushes and its black holes and the brown brook—every single bit of it, gray sky and all."

"Ah, child, it is the sunshine in your heart which lights up this bit of poor old Ireland, plain and commonplace as it is! Wait till you have seen your own country, with its glowing blue skies and its flowers—not but what old Ireland is worth it a dozen times over any day."

"There's the true patriot for you," laughed Mollie, "and though I've only half a right to it, I'd be willing myself to give up the sunny south and its marvels for my cross old grandfather and this wet, ugly corner of the world."

She had slipped down on the rug beside him as she spoke, and at her last word bent over and rubbed her soft cheek caressingly

against the wrinkled hand on the arm of the chair.

"All the same, child Mollie," he said gently, passing his fingers over her soft, cloudy black hair, "there will come a day sooner or later when you will be left alone, and it is that which makes that letter welcome. For most of my income dies with me, whereas your father's mother is a rich woman, and you are, as far as I know, the last of the family."

"But my father was not an only child, was he?" asked the girl.

"No, there was another son," answered the old man, after a moment's silence.

"Then I have an uncle. Do you know what he is like?"

"I never met him, though I have heard him spoken of sometimes. But he is dead, child, long dead. He died not long after your own father."

"And was he married? Did he leave any children?"

"I never heard. I do not think so. He died far away from home, in America, I believe, though I have no notion where."

"How lonely it sounds! My father died young enough, but at least it was in his own land, with friends near him."

"Yes, but he had made the friends and kept them."

"That means that my uncle——"

"They were utterly unlike, the two brothers, from all I could gather. Well, well, both are dead now, and your poor mother has followed them, and here are you, little Mollie, with only an old grandfather in Ireland and a still older grandmother in Portugal—for she is older than I, though no power on earth would bring her to acknowledge the fact. The grandfather has done what he could for his daughter's child. It is little at best. Let us see what the wealthy grandmother has in view for her son's daughter."

With a sudden air of resolution Mollie tore open the thin envelope.

"If it is in Portuguese you must read it, grandfather. I have forgotten every word I once knew, and it was only baby talk at the best."

But it was in English, of a sort, but still understandable. And this is how it ran:

"My Dear Granddaughter:

"I received last month the report of your studies up to July, and am rejoiced to see that your progress in this, the last year of your study time, was as it should be. But now, dear child, the years of study are achieved you are arrived at the edge of becoming a young lady of society. Your toilet will require care and attention. It is necessary that you should have some practice in going into the world, and so prepare for the position you will one day hold. From what your excellent grandfather has informed me, you have but small occasion of going into society in the district where his *quinta* is situated. This being so, I feel sure that he will upraise no objection when I make my claim to a share of your companionship.

"As has been my custom for some years, I intend to pass the winter in my property near Funchal, and I should desire you to come at once so as to pass it with me. Since your good grandfather's health prevents his accompanying you, and giving me, as I have hoped, the pleasure of his society, I have made arrangements for you to travel under the guard of the wife of a captain of a steamer which journeys between London and Oporto. The captain, with whom I have spoken, is a very serious man, and his wife will take every care of you. I desire you to take this boat, the *Guadiana,* for another reason besides this one I have mentioned. The steamer in which I intend to travel is leaving here in a few days after you arrive. You

will thus entirely avoid traveling alone, which is not convenable for a Portuguese young lady. I have sent instructions to my man of affairs at London to write and make all arrangements with your excellent grandfather. The S. S. *Guadiana,* which is leaving here in three days, will remain about a week in London. So you will start, I hope, at the end of November, and, if God wills it, reach Oporto some five days later. I need not add with what pleasure I await your coming. Present my distinguished compliments to your excellent and respectable grandfather, and believe me, your devoted grandmother,

"GUILHERMINA MATTOS BALDAQUE MOURA
DE VASCONCELLOS ALVARENGA."

Mollie laid down the letter with a deep sigh.

"Only too understandable," she said, and looked up at the old man with a pleading look in her eyes.

But he shook his head with great decision.

"There is no way out, Mollie machree. It is her turn now," and then as the tears rushed into her beautiful, black-fringed blue eyes. "Why, child, you do not know what you have to look forward to! Have you no wish to see your father's land, your own for that matter?"

"Yes, it has been my dream for ever

so long. But to go alone among strangers——"

The old man smiled reassuringly.

"Your own people, child, and good warm-hearted folk at that. Why, where is your courage, Mollie?"

Mollie flushed and tried to wink her tears away, but in spite of the effort one big drop rolled down her cheek.

"My courage?" she repeated in a tone of reflection. "That is just what I am asking myself. And I do not believe I have any. I think that is just my failing, grandfather. I have often thought so, I am a coward, not for pain or danger exactly, at least I hope not, but for change, for new things, for anything that is strange and different from the dear old every-day life. Of course, now I have the excuse that I must leave you behind as well as dear old Rathmor, but that does not change the fact. I am simply hating the idea of going away alone into a new life, and that is cowardly, I know."

She looked up at him with questioning eyes, a smile gleaming now in their still tear-wet depths. He smiled bravely back,

repressing a sigh for the blank, lonely days to come.

"Well, perhaps it is not exactly adventurous or bold," he said, "but it is something to have discovered the tendency at all. That is a first step toward curing it, is it not? So we will both turn our efforts in that direction, Mollie child, and see what courage we can gather between us. For that is a point in which good-bys have a most unfortunate resemblance to quarrels, you know—it takes two to make them."

CHAPTER II

FELLOW PASSENGERS

THE weather all day had wavered in an undecided fashion between fog and thin, drizzling rain, but by four o'clock, when Mollie's cab turned the corner of the last squalid street leading down to Shadwell Basin, rain had conquered, and it was through a veil of gray, glistening drops that she first saw that especially dreary and forsaken bit of London Docks, the inky basin, and the smartly painted but very small steamer, which was to bear her to her new home across a thousand miles of water.

"I hope you will be all right, Mollie," said the London cousin, in whose house she had been spending the last week. Her tone implied that she rather doubted it, and poor Mollie's already heavy heart sank a little lower still as she followed her boxes across the narrow gangway to the ship. The older lady, lifting her skirts from the glistening

planks, looked round with a dissatisfied air at the encumbered deck, and with hardly less disdain at the small saloon out of which the half dozen cabins opened.

But Mollie's eyes brightened at the sight of the cheerful little lady who rose from her cushioned wicker chair beside the open stove, and now came forward to welcome her. She had met her the day before, and in these strange new surroundings she seemed almost an old acquaintance.

"I am so glad you are in good time," she said. "Just at the last moment we have heard that there is another passenger, a lady, too. I wanted to know if you would rather have a small cabin to yourself, or share the lady's larger cabin with her. I will show you both and you can choose for yourself. First come, first served, you know. Most ladies prefer the larger cabin, because there is more air. A port-hole gives on the lower deck and can be kept open in nearly all weathers."

"Oh, I should advise you to choose the *larger* one, Mollie," said her cousin. There was a somewhat sarcastic accent on the word

"larger," but it was quite lost on little Mrs. Sullivan.

"It is not bad, is it?" she said cheerfully to Mollie. "The couch here is comfortable, and luckily this time we are not carrying onions nor oxen nor anything of that kind on the lower deck. The berths are pretty wide, and there is plenty of room for two. There have been four here, sometimes, when the boat was very crowded. We are only licensed for eight passengers in all, but the gentlemen sign on as stewards or deck-hands, and we manage to fit them all in."

"Are there many passengers this time?" asked Mollie.

"Oh, no. This is not the time of year for them. Besides us two, for I am a passenger this trip, there are a few more young ladies, and now this new one. She is young, too, I think, or at least unmarried. A Miss More or Moore—perhaps she is Irish like ourselves."

She was interrupted by the sound of voices and footsteps overhead and hastened out to meet two girls, both heavily laden

with many small parcels, who came laughing and talking into the saloon.

"I think I'll take this side," said Mollie, putting her big coat down on the berth which ran longways with the ship. "The upper one to sleep in, the lower for my things. Oh, I do hope I shall be a good sailor! It was always all right from Dover to Calais and Waterford to Milford, but this boat seems awfully small to go wandering about the Atlantic Ocean in."

"The captain's wife seems a good sort," said the cousin, "and those two, who, since they know her so well, have doubtless made the journey before, seem in good spirits enough about it. I suppose I must be leaving you, Mollie——"

But this Mrs. Sullivan would not hear of.

"Sure, we are not starting for a few hours yet. You'll not refuse a cup of tea. It will be ready in a jiffy now. I have sent the steward to fetch the boiling water, and I'll have it wetted in a moment."

They made a very cosy little meal at the warm end of the saloon under the hanging lamp.

"The last repast of the condemned!" laughed one of the newcomers, Lucy Hamer, a slight, yellow-haired little body of about twenty-two, helping herself to another slice of the rich, crumbly cake which Mrs. Sullivan had unwrapped from its silver paper to put on the table. "After this, sighs and groans, followed by weak tea and toast."

"Nonsense!" said the other, a taller and older as well as graver girl, with big greenish gray eyes and quantities of soft brown hair. "If only you had more courage and less imagination you would never be ill at all."

"Like the Christian Science people! I wonder if Mrs. Eddy was ever seasick? A trip in this boat through the Bay of Biscay in the sort of weather we had when I came over in September—that would be a test worth trying, and a salutary penitential exercise into the bargain! Are you a good sailor, Miss Moore?"

"I do not know yet," said Mollie. It was not worth while correcting the mistake in her name. Most people, on first hearing

the one she kept out of the string she owned, for everyday use, "Moura," took up that pronunciation of it. "I suppose you have made the journey before?"

"Three times," said Miss Hamer, "and always vowed that each one should be the last. Sybil Meredith here is a veteran. This is your eighth trip, is it not, Sybil?"

"Yes, my eighth," said Sybil Meredith.

"Then you have lived a long time in Portugal?" said Mollie, with interest.

"Nearly twelve years," was the answer.

"And of course you can speak Portuguese? I wish I could."

"Oh, you will soon learn," said Miss Hamer. "It sounds like bad French mixed up with Latin, but to speak it you must twist your tongue round every vowel and and be sure to put 'sh' wherever you can fit it in."

Mollie smiled at this unflattering description of her native tongue, but Mrs. Sullivan took up the cudgels in its defence.

"I'm sure it is a very pretty language," she said, "and much pleasanter to listen to than Spanish, which always makes you

fancy that they have something in their mouths which makes them lisp all the time. You will soon remember your Portuguese again, Miss Mollie, once you get back to the place. It is only want of practice."

"Then you have been to Portugal before, Miss Moore?" asked Lucy Hamer.

"She was born there," explained the captain's wife, "and her name is not Moore at all, but Moura—Maria Margarida Moura de Vasconcellos Alvarenga. That is right, is it not, Miss Mollie?"

She looked at Mollie with a smile, while Miss Hamer uttered an exclamation of surprise, which seemed as if it had found an echo in the dimness outside the circle of lamplight. At the same moment a dark figure came forward from the doorway, and Mrs. Sullivan started from her seat.

"*That* will be Miss Moore, our new passenger," she said. "Is it not?"

"Yes," said the newcomer, laying down her bag on the end of the table. She was rather a striking girl, not pretty, but interesting, with soft black hair, a pale but not sallow skin, and eyes which were surpris-

ingly light under their black lashes. Her dark gray costume was English in cut, but the bow of plaid ribbon at her neck and her crimson belt, as well as the small hat which rested on her severely-dressed hair, had together a curiously foreign air. Lucy Hamer stared at her for a moment in rather impolite surprise.

"*That* is Miss Moore?" she said to herself. "Well, I should have said that that was the Senhora Donna Maria Margarida, and the rest—who, for her part, looks as much of a fresh Irish colleen as they make them."

"At any rate, you will not be at a loss for company, Mollie," said her cousin, as they stood once more on the wet, slippery deck. All round the thin veil of rain, stained here and there with the yellow blur of a gas-lamp, shut out the dreary dock. Mollie shivered as she watched the cab which was carrying away her cousin disappear up the sordid, dismal street. Her heart was sore for the home she had left behind, and full of shrinking from the strange unknown one she was going to. She felt very forlorn and

lonely, as she turned and climbed back down the narrow way to the saloon. A sound of music came from behind the red curtain they had drawn before the door, the lively tinkle of a guitar, on which Lucy was picking out the notes of a plaintive little melody. There was something familiar in it, and Mollie hummed over a bar or two as she moved toward the others. Lucy looked up eagerly.

"You know the tune?" she said. "It is a *fado*—one of those popular tunes they put all sorts of different words to, often making them up as the occasion suggests. I expect your nurse sang it to you often enough. But I am only a beginner on the guitar. You have no notion what music one can get out of it. You should hear my master, a little dried-up monkey of a man, with the melodious name of Heliodoro Thomaz Furtado. He can make his guitar laugh and cry like a human being."

She broke into a lively little air which seemed to put quicksilver into one's feet.

"That is his," she said. "One can hardly help dancing to it."

"It makes one think of a feast-day," put in Sybil, "one of those blazing June days, when people come from far and near, dancing for miles along the road, barefoot or in their wooden shoes, a sort of jiggy dance with uplifted, snapping fingers by twos and threes, singing together——"

Lucy broke off again into a slow, plaintive tune:

"Se as lagrimas fossem pedras
Com as que eu tinho chorado,
Mandava fazer castellos
No meio do mar salgado."

"If tears, if tears were stones
With the tears wept by me,
I should have castles built
In the midst of the salt sea."

"No, that's too appropriate—one feels blue enough as it is! Just two months at home and then three more years a thousand miles away from every one, and the Bay of Biscay into the bargain. No, my dears! Let's be merry while we can. And that reminds me. I have got about three dozen things to settle while I am still capable of

movement. Once we pass Gravesend I am no longer a human creature, but a mere limp bundle of misery."

She jumped up, and was off into her cabin in a flash, while Mollie, bethinking herself of her new cabin-mate, turned away into her own. Unlike the four smaller ones, two on either side, hers did not open straight into the saloon, but lay back behind a narrow passage shut off by a curtain. The curtain was drawn over and the door behind it was shut. Mollie knocked, but apparently the noise on deck overhead drowned the sound, for no answer came. After a moment, she tried the door, which opened noiselessly, and went in. After all, it was as much her cabin as that of the newcomer, whom, as yet, she had hardly seen. She had her back turned now, bending over the narrow velvet-covered lounge under the porthole giving on the lower deck. In the dim light of the small lamp Mollie could not see what it was that held her attention so closely that she never even noticed her entrance. But the next step brought her in view of the couch, and then she saw that

it was at a parcel of her own that the other was staring so intently, a small box of Belleek china which she was carrying as a present from her grandfather to Donna Guilhermina, and on the paper wrapper of which he had, with his shaky old hand, written her full address.

"Inquisitive thing!" thought Mollie, and the girl, turning, seemed to read the words on her lips. She colored slightly, then she smiled, and with the smile her sad, rather severe features lighted up marvelously, till she became almost pretty.

"You are thinking me very inquisitive," she said, "and indeed it is so. But the strange name attracted me. It is Portuguese, of course?"

"Yes," said Mollie, disarmed by the smile.

"And you are Portuguese, too?"

"Half only," said Mollie, "and I know it's the Irish half of me which is uppermost, not to say largest. I am afraid that my Portuguese relatives will be very disappointed."

"Oh, I do not think so," said Miss Moore, smiling again, and Mollie found herself

blushing almost before she realized that she was being paid a compliment.

That night, lying awake in her berth and listening to the wash of the water against the side close to her ear as the steamer slipped down the river toward Gravesend, Mollie reviewed the day's experiences, and felt her heavy heart lighten a little. Her unknown home was beginning to take on definite colors, and those were mostly bright ones. Mollie felt something in her, some hitherto unsuspected fiber stirring in eager anticipation of the blue skies, the golden sunshine, the clear, crystal air of her father's country. Then her traveling companions were unusually interesting, pleasant girls. Mollie, drowsy now, let her thoughts wander from one to the other, and found them always lingering longest with Miss Moore. It was not that she liked her better than the other two—on the contrary, Sybil Meredith's steadfast gray-green eyes and Lucy Hamer's laughing philosophy were much more to her taste than the taciturnity of the pale, serious, dark-haired girl who lay now

quietly sleeping in the berth at right angles to her own.

But whether she liked her or not, and it was yet early days to decide that, she felt strangely interested in her. There were movements of hers, a look at times, something even more intangible, which seemed strangely familiar. Even her eyes, those light but very clear blue eyes under their black lashes—surely somewhere, in the dim past, she had seen them before! She must ask her, she decided dreamily, as lulled by the even, regular movement and the wash of the water close to her ears, she at last fell into a deep, peaceful sleep.

CHAPTER III

A COLLISION

A GLEAM of sunshine was shining right across the cabin when Mollie woke from a troubled dream, and lay for a moment wondering where in the world she was. A look to her right hand, where the small, round port-hole gave a glimpse of a tumbled expanse of blue, white-flecked water, soon cleared her ideas, and she sat up in her berth only, however, to lie down again a moment later, feeling decidedly giddy and uncomfortable. It was one thing, she reflected, to get out of bed in Waterford Harbor or Milford Haven and dress quietly while the boat kept quiet under one's feet, and quite another to front the complicated business of the toilet while all this jigging up and down and straining of boards and rattle of chains and beat of the screw, which seemed only a few yards away, was going on around her. So she lay quiet, wondering what the

others were doing. Miss Moore's berth was empty, so she at least had been brave enough to dress.

It was with a positive feeling of envy that Mollie greeted Mrs. Sullivan, as that small lady, very spick and span in a flannel coat and skirt with a neat motor-cap on her yellow hair, appeared beside her.

"Well, well!" she said. "You do not feel inclined to get up for breakfast? What shall I send you—steak and onions, ham and eggs, or a kippered? Or will you prefer just tea and toast like Miss Meredith. The other one, Miss Hamer, is prostrate already, but cheerful as ever in spite of it all."

Tea and toast was Mollie's choice. The other dishes had lost the attractiveness they were wont to have after an hour's brisk ride across the bog with her grandfather, or a scamper with the dogs up and down the long avenue on a dewy, misty, spring morning. But even the tea and toast when they came brought a lump to her throat, and a tear or two trickled down into the thick cup as the picture rose before her of the cosy little dining-room at home, with its glowing turf

fire and the snowy table where she had been wont to preside so proudly, pouring out the good strong tea from the old black tea-pot which they both preferred to the more stately silver one on the sideboard, and the rich yellow cream so thick it would hardly pour at all. It was a relief to finish gulping down the nasty stuff they called tea on board, and lying down again, let her thoughts wander back to the dear old place which must be so lonely now, till, the rocking aiding, she forgot homesickness and longing alike in a doze.

When Mollie awoke the sun no longer shone in at the port-hole, nor indeed was there any tossing expanse visible through the little round of glass, across which it seemed as if some one had drawn a thick grayish veil. The boat was much steadier, and the beat of the screw less perceptible. On the other hand, from minute to minute, the queer, muffled, croaking noise, something between a bleat and a scream, of the foghorn sounded through the silence. Mollie climbed cautiously out of her berth. There was no excuse for lying abed any

longer now that dressing did not involve a strenuous bout of gymnastic exercise as well.

She felt slightly giddy, but very pleased with herself, when she opened the door of the cabin and appeared in the saloon beyond. Mrs. Sullivan, sitting in her basket-chair by the fire, started up with an exclamation of pleasure.

"There, now, and I just thinking of going in to see if I could help you a bit. It will do you good to be up. Do you feel like a turn on deck? Miss Moore and Miss Meredith are taking a brisk walk—there is only Miss Hamer still in bed, and she, poor thing, would feel the motion on a duck-pond. But, if the weather keeps on like this, I do not despair of getting her up, too."

Mollie could not restrain a gasp of surprise when she emerged from below into a layer of fog, through which she only dimly perceived the figures of the other two. Around and above it lay in thick, impenetrable folds, pierced at short intervals by the wail of the foghorn. Even while she stood there wondering, the long-drawn hoot was echoed to the right, and she could dimly

see, not five hundred yards away, a darker patch gliding through the thick air in the opposite direction.

"Creepy, is it not?" said Sybil. "And this is a crowded part of the Channel, too. That is why we have to slow down to less than half speed. But it is smooth enough—that is one comfort."

As the day went on it grew even smoother, till Lucy Hamer summoned courage to creep up and join the group as they sat, warmly wrapped, in the shelter of the chart-room.

"If one could always go softly like this," she said, "I should not half mind traveling. As it is, I'd go overland every time, but it's much dearer, especially when one is carrying back heaps of things! And it's so lonely, too. And the Spanish trains bump very little less than the ship."

"One goes softly but slowly, too," said Mollie. "This will keep us back."

"Oh, yes; a day or two, I expect."

"Not more, I hope, or I may miss the Madeira boat."

"You are going to Madeira?"

It was Miss Moore who spoke, joining in the conversation for the first time, and that in a tone of such eager interest that Mollie started.

"Yes," she said, "I am to spend the winter there. Do you know the place, perhaps?"

"No," answered the other, "only by hearsay, that is. It is very beautiful."

"A land where bright blossoms are scentless,
And songless, bright birds."

quoted Lucy. "Lindsay Gordon must have been thinking about his old home and birthplace when he wrote that. I have heard an Australian complain that it is not at all true of Australia, but it does happen to be of Madeira."

"But not of Portugal, I hope?" said Mollie.

"Oh, no, blossoms are not scentless there. Indeed, there are scents and to spare. It is a pity you are going off again as soon as you reach Oporto. You would like the picturesque old place."

"Oh, but I hope to return. My grandmother speaks only of spending the winter in Funchal, where she has a *quinta*."

"She has a very handsome one in the country not far from the place where we spend the summer, too," said Lucy. "But, perhaps, you know it."

"Freamunde, do you mean? I know it little enough, though it is there that I was born. But I went to Ireland so young I can only just remember vaguely white walls, very bright and shining, with great bunches of wistaria hanging over them—I can never see wistaria without thinking of those walls —and a big, dark, cool room, with a slippery floor, where some one gave me biscuits out of a silver box. It must have been my grandmother."

"I can not imagine Donna Guilhermina giving any one biscuits," laughed Lucy. "If you had said an alms now, or a wise counsel, or a stately censure—one can not associate the word 'scolding' with that majestic lady, who makes one think of the days of powder and stiff brocades."

"But she is very kind in spite of her manner," said Sybil, noting Mollie's alarmed air. "I think it is only her loneliness which makes her so unapproachable. Her loneli-

ness, and perhaps her sorrows, too. I have known her to do very kind things, and I am sure that it would take very little to thaw her completely."

Lucy Hamer laughed outright at Mollie's air of consternation.

"*Qui s'excuse, s'accuse!* Do not mind our talk, Miss Mollie—or is it Donna Maria Margarida you prefer to be called? We have never had a chance of seeing Donna Guilhermina in her unfrozen moments. She considers my pupils the worst-behaved young people in Portugal—and I am not sure that she is not right, while Sybil's people have fallen under her displeasure for quite another reason. So, you see, we are in no position to judge. I am sure you will get on splendidly with her."

But Mollie did not feel at all sure, and the future once more lost its bright colors and wrapped itself, like the sea and sky around her, in a dull gray fog. A great wave of homesickness came over her. The slow, monotonous movement of the boat, punctuated by the mournful toot of the fog-horn, became unendurable. She got up from

her seat. "I think I shall go down to the saloon," she said. "It is so cold here."

"Let us try a brisk walk up and down the deck first," said Miss Moore. "It will warm our feet."

Mollie acquiesced, and the other put an arm through hers. For a few moments they walked in silence up and down the narrow space available on the afterdeck. The fog was growing thicker as the dusk came on. Mollie shivered.

"Oh, how horribly dreary it is," she said, and though she tried to speak cheerfully, her words ended in something very like a sob.

"Yes, but you are going toward the sunshine."

"That is quite true," said Mollie. Though the other girl spoke simply enough there was in her voice a note which Mollie had already noticed once or twice, a note of forlornness, of apartness.

"I ought not to be grumbling, and that's the truth," she said now, "but I do love things to go on in the dear, same old way day after day; in the dear, same old places,

with the same people. I am rather like a cat, I know, I love familiar corners and hate change and upsetting. It is very unadventurous of me, and even cowardly. I ought to be ashamed of myself, especially when I see the others. There's that Miss Hamer, she was only eighteen when she left home to go all alone to a strange country, and Miss Meredith—one has only to look at her to be sure that she is brave, and you—you are leaving home, too."

Miss Moore shook her head. "I have no home," she said.

"Well, your own country then."

"No, it is not my country either. I have no country, strictly speaking. If I had the catlike disposition you claim, it's a most unhappy cat I'd have been, for I have never been able to stay long anywhere."

"Oh, you poor thing," said Mollie. "But you are Irish, at any rate, by birth. At least your name is Irish."

Miss Moore hesitated. It seemed as if she was going to say something, which, after an effort, she restrained. There was a moment's silence before she spoke.

"Not my Christian name, at any rate. It is Guida."

"Guida," said Mollie, "a pretty name, though I have never heard any one called by it. . . . Guida Moore."

Again it seemed as if the other girl was about to speak, but again she restrained herself, and they walked up and down a few times more in silence.

But when Mollie was lying once more in her berth, the old desolation returned. The boat was creeping slowly as ever through the oily water, the fog-horn hooted at intervals, the wash of the waves sounded close to her side. A great longing for the safe shelter of home, a great dread of the vague future came over her, and with a sob, choked back so as not to disturb her companion, the tears came at last, a rush of bitter tears pressed out by that unendurable, aching sense of loss in her heart, the dull fear of the unknown future, against which she had battled all day. In spite of her efforts the sobs shook her. She pressed her face into the hard pillow, but she could not keep them down. In the quiet of the

cabin one sounded so loud that she tried to turn it into a cough, but Guida Moore moved uneasily. She would speak now, thought Mollie, half-dreading, half, in spite of herself, in her bitter loneliness, hoping for a word. And indeed the other girl turned over—she was awake evidently. Mollie held her breath. The next instant, with a sickening thud, the steamer crashed into something, and quivered from end to end. The flame in the hanging lamp shot high, then sank again. There were shouts and a hurried rush of feet sounded overhead, the fog-horn gave out a loud, despairing shriek. . . .

CHAPTER IV

"SAPPHIRE AND TURQUOISE"

IT SEEMED to Mollie that the echo of the crash still rang in her ears when Guida Moore stood beside her, holding out her cloak.

"I do not think it is anything," she said, "but you had better put this on in case we have to run for it."

She wrapped the warm coat round Mollie's shaking shoulders as she helped her out of her berth. She herself was quite calm.

"I do not think it is serious," she said. "We should have felt it already if there was anything the matter with the steamer. There, we are going on again."

She moved away to the door, and Mollie could hear her quiet voice outside, alternating with Mrs. Sullivan's quick, nervous tones. She came back after a moment.

"It is nothing," she said. "We struck a piece of floating wreckage, a great twisted

mass of ropes and timber, which might have made a hole in our side, but which luckily did not. The fog is as thick as ever. We are nearly a day late already."

"And I hope we shall be two or three," said Mollie, sinking down on to the couch; "because then I shall miss the Madeira boat and so gain nearly a fortnight before the second voyage. One at a time is quite enough."

She tried to laugh, but the attempt ended in a choke and a sob.

"Get back into bed, you poor child," said Guida. "It was a nasty shock."

She helped her into her berth again, and drew the tumbled clothes straight and close around her, then she moved away toward the shelf where the water-bottles stood. Mollie heard the clink of glass, and a moment later Guida stood beside her again holding out a medicine-glass full of water clouded lightly with a few drops of milky liquid.

"Drink it off," she said, "it will do you good."

And Mollie obediently drank it down,

even though she had to stop once or twice for the catching of her breath.

"There," said Guida, lightly brushing the tear-stained waves of hair from Mollie's hot forehead and then drawing the little curtain further forward so as to shut out the light. "That will steady your nerves. Now, you must sleep. No more thinking. Things will look very different in the morning."

"How kind you are," said Mollie. "It feels like being back at the convent, when the old Sister used to come with a tray of hot black-currant tea on winter nights, and every one who had even the suspicion of a cold made the most of it so as to get a cup and be tucked cosily up after it."

"That is a compliment, indeed," said Guida. "No one has ever told me that I was anything so nice as an old Sister."

She drew the covering up round Mollie's shoulders with a gentle, lingering touch, hesitated a moment, and then bent down and lightly pressed her cheek with her lips before turning away and climbing back into her own berth.

Mollie was languidly brushing her hair the next morning when her cabin companion, who as on the day before had got up before she was awake, came back into the cabin.

"Let me help you," she said, stopping behind Mollie so that her face was for a moment visible in the glass over her shoulder.

"Oh," exclaimed Mollie, in frank admiration, "how nice you do look!"

The black hair which had been so severely brushed away to the top of her head lay now in soft masses round Guida's pale face, the thick, loose knot fastened at the nape of her neck with a big black bow in the fashion of Mollie's own. The fresh air and movement had brought a faint flush of color into her cheeks, the smile which so wonderfully lighted up her features played now round her lips and in her eyes.

"Oh, how nice you look," repeated Mollie, staring at the double reflection, and then added, in a surprised tone, "Why, we are rather like each other!"

It was true enough. In shape and coloring the two faces were very similar. Now

that Guida smiled, her lips took the soft curves of Mollie's fresh young mouth, the hair of the two was indistinguishable in its cloudy blackness. Only the color of the eyes was different, their shade rather, for both pairs were blue.

"Sapphire and turquoise," said Guida.

"No, turquoise is pretty, but too opaque for eyes," protested Mollie. "Yours are the color of the sky."

"And yours of the sea," laughed Guida. "What compliments we are paying each other. Well, now you know why my face seems familiar."

But Mollie shook her head.

"It is not your face exactly—though to be sure we are really very much alike. Do you think that we are, perhaps, relatives?"

Guida shook her head. The smile had faded, and with her usual expression of cold reserve the likeness to Mollie faded too.

"Almost as far back as I can remember, I have had no one," she said. "I have been alone in the world."

"Oh, you poor thing," said Mollie, "I do pity you. Even a grandmother whom one

does not know and is dreadfully afraid of is better than that."

"Why are you afraid?" asked Guida, a little scornfully. She had taken the comb from Mollie's unresisting hand and was now busy arranging her hair. "Why do you pay attention to what the others say? She would not send for you, I suppose, unless she wanted you. It is something to be wanted."

"Oh, I know, but I told you I was a coward. I dread the unknown. I wish I could stay in Portugal. I am beginning to fancy I can remember it a little. It has a feeling of home almost. But to go wandering off again——"

Guida interrupted with a laugh which sounded a little forced.

"A dreadful prospect, truly; five days or so on a comfortable ship and then three months in a sort of fairy palace by the sea. I shall think of you when I sit, drumming French irregular verbs into my pupils' heads—and pity you. Or shall I go instead?"

"I wish you could," sighed Mollie, "or

better still, both of us. I want to see my grandmother, of course, because she is my father's mother. It was his death which was the great grief of her life. He died so young, not twenty-seven, after only a few days' illness. I can just remember him—a brown face with very white teeth and thick, black hair, which I used to rumple with my baby fingers, while he would hold me high up in the air and laugh up at me, calling me all sorts of pet names in Portuguese. They are almost the only words I can remember. *'O minha ricca menina, O seu maroto!'* I can only think of him as laughing. It seems to have been always sunshine in those days—there is no shadow in my memories of it, nothing but laughter and happiness till his death came to change it all. Such a sudden death! My mother never recovered from the shock. She was very ill, nearly dying, too, till they got her away back home again to Ireland. She rallied, then, but was never really well again, and not two years later she died."

"And you were left alone. How old were you?"

"Alone but for my grandfather. I was just eight. I am eighteen now."

"And I a year older. One would not think that there is so little difference between us, but one grows old quickly when one comes face to face with life as I have done. For seven years now I have earned my own living, first *au pair* in a Belgian school, then later as a teacher. I have been teaching for five years, teaching and learning. It will seem almost like holidays to leave one's learning aside."

"Except for Portuguese—but you will soon pick that up."

Guida smiled, a peculiar smile. "Yes," she said, "I shall have little difficulty with Portuguese."

"I suppose you know French awfully well," said Mollie, "and German, perhaps?"

"Yes, I can speak German. My best time was in Germany. I taught in a big school, but I lived with a private family. They were good people, a genuine old German Catholic family, and it was very homelike, the most homelike place I have known."

"Oh, you poor thing," said Mollie, "you poor lonely thing! And I grumbling because I am between two homes and pulled two ways at once. But I will really be brave. If only this fog would lift a little."

Toward afternoon she had her wish. The fog lightened gradually, and though the swell increased as they worked their way through the widening Channel out into the Atlantic, they made good progress till, toward the dawn of the next day, they turned southward by Ushant and had to make their way across the Bay full against a headwind. No one had the courage to get up that day except Mrs. Sullivan, who made a short visit to the others and then returned to her cabin, it being practically impossible to keep one's feet in the saloon. The next day was very little better, but when Mollie awoke the morning after, she perceived that the boat was steadier than it had been.

"We are out of the Bay," said Guida, coming into the cabin. "This afternoon, we shall be in sight of Portugal. Get up quickly and come and see Finisterre."

The Spanish coast lay, a long, irregular,

purple line against the eastern horizon, with here and there a cluster of white dots telling where a village clung to the side of the hills. The sky was cloudless, the sea a deep, slate-blue, showing almost an indigo shade against the broad fiery orange band which, as the short day wore to its close, flamed along the west. Just before dusk they passed the entrance to the Bay of Vigo, half hidden between its rock-masses, and as darkness fell caught sight of the first lights twinkling along the coast of Portugal.

"That is Valençia," explained Sybil Meredith to Mollie, "and opposite it, but in Spain, lies Tuy, with a bit of a river as the frontier between. Physically, Galicia and Portugal belong to each other. The language is almost the same. There are many Gallegos in Porto, all the men-servants nearly, and certainly all the porters, who lie in the sun, with their knots, at the corners of the streets, waiting to be hired."

The short twilight faded into dark and the stars flared out, great sparkling points of light in unfamiliar positions. It gave

Mollie quite a shock to find that the Great Bear had moved up from the northern horizon almost overhead.

"Well, ladies, I hope we shall make to-morrow morning's tide into the Douro," the captain informed them at dinner. "I am afraid we have cut it rather fine with that Madeira boat of yours, Miss Mollie. It is down to start to-morrow, but you must blame the fog, not me."

Mollie was not inclined to blame the fog. She had all the traveler's longing for dry land again, and had, moreover, grown to like her traveling companions too much to be anxious to say good-by to them. With Guida she felt almost intimate, and that though she had been given very little more insight into the circumstances of her life. A sad, colorless existence it must have been, that she knew, but it was as much her friendlessness as her friendliness which opened her the way into Mollie's warm, impulsive heart.

However, since the boat which touched at Leixœs, the port belonging to Oporto, on

its way to Madeira, was due to start early the next morning, she had small fear that she would not get the respite she hoped for, and so a further chance of cultivating her new acquaintances.

CHAPTER V

THE DONNA GUILHERMINA

MOLLIE did not sleep well that last night on the *Guadiana.* They had sat up late the evening before, chatting together, and then when, about eleven o'clock, the boat came to a stop and anchored for the night off the bar, had gone up on deck to see the lights along the coast, the bright cluster on the left marking the port of Leixœs built out into the sea around the mouth of the little River Leça, the long, irregular line between the wooded masses of the seaside suburb of St. Joao da Foz, the green, twinkling lanterns of the light-house on the jetty beside the bar, and the signal station of Our Lady of the Star beyond and above.

But, though she only fell asleep after midnight, with the first glimmer of day-light Mollie awoke, and as soon as it grew light enough crept softly out of bed, dressed

hastily and quietly enough, not to disturb Guida, and then slipped up on deck, eager for the first glimpse of her father's country.

There it lay before her, all gray and dun in the cold light, the low, rock-sprinkled coast, the dim hills beyond, the misty, far-away masses of the old city, with one great, slender tower showing high above the rest like a finger pointing heavenward. Mollie shivered in the raw, damp air, a little chilled, too, in her eager expectation. But then the sun rose, and minute by minute the scene grew and warmed into life—the sky changed from palest steely blue to deep turquoise flecked with rosy cloudlets, the sea sparkled with a million points of light, the wide, smooth expanse of water at the river mouth gleamed like an opal. Along the sea-wall the palm-trees changed from black to green; the old fort, with its pink-washed dome and the flagstaff, from which the signals were flying in answer to their own, shone like some ancient mosque against the eastern sky.

A fleet of black fishing-boats, sharply curved at prow and stern, moved home-

ward past the bar. One of them hugged the sandy spit of land too closely and upset at the extreme point, throwing out its silver burden of sardines in a great glittering heap, over which a score of sea-gulls swooped and hovered, regardless of the gesticulating and noisy owners of the spoil.

Mollie thought of Shadwell Basin and laughed aloud in sheer joy of the beauty of the scene before her, the keen, pure air, the golden sunshine, the gleaming, pearly shades of sea and sky. Something in her nature, some hitherto untouched fiber in her heart awoke to life, and for the first time she felt the eager stirring of that passionate love of the sun-bathed, glowing strip of land between mountains and ocean, which is such a characteristic of its children.

"I thought I should find you up here," said Sybil Meredith. They had just taken the pilot on board and were moving slowly forward toward the bar. This great sandbank, fed continually by the deposits brought down from the wild mountain districts of the interior by the almost tropical rains, leaves only a narrow passage for en-

trance into the splendid port formed by the river—which no ship drawing more than eighteen feet of water can hope to negotiate, and for which reason all the larger steamers bound for the south have to touch at the new harbor of Leixœs.

The two girls, climbing over coils of rope and chains, reached the prow, where they took up their station beside the still dripping anchor which had held them fast all night, producing a peculiar short roll which had not been without its disagreeable side for Lucy Hamer.

"She will not venture out of bed till we are anchored safe and firm opposite the Alfandega," explained Sybil, "but Miss Moore is stirring already. Is it not a lovely view? And look at that blue sky! Who would think that we are at the end of November. See, there is the doctor's boat and the customs man with him—and that other boat—it seems to have followed us in from the sea. Some other functionary, I suppose. There are always piles of papers."

Mollie only half heard her. They were moving now in the narrowest part of the

channel between the end of the bar, where the gulls shrieked over the sardines, and the sea-wall, with the public gardens and a row of handsome villas beyond. On the southern side the ground rose directly from the water's edge in softly swelling hills, but on the northern, gray, rugged cliffs backed the broad highway, down which the electric trams whizzed, and two long-horned oxen pulled a heavily-laden cart. The *Guadiana* was moving very slowly up the broad bosom of the river. The boat with the doctor in it had fallen astern, while the yellow flag fluttered down from the masthead; the other boat, in which an elderly man sat, was clinging now to the lower edge of the ladder which had been lowered for the pilot, and one of the boatmen shouted out something in Portuguese.

It so happened that no one but Guida Moore, who had just emerged from below, was within earshot. She leaned over the railing and the man, who was warmly wrapped up in a somewhat shabby overcoat, looked up at her.

"The Senhora Donna Maria Margarida

Moura de Vasconcellos Alvarenga?" he asked. "She is on board? I want to speak to her and the captain at once."

"The captain is busy with the customs officer," answered Guida, in Portuguese as easy as his own, "but as to Donna Maria Margarida . . ."

"Perhaps it is the Senhora herself," he interrupted, looking at her, "surely it is—the likeness is unmistakable. Am I right?"

"Yes, I am Maria Margarida Moura de Vasconcellos Alvarenga," answered Guida.

"Ah, I thought so. Well, Senhora, there is no time to lose. The boat for Madeira is due to start in less than an hour. The Senhora Donna Guilhermina, your *excellentissima* grandmother, has sent me, her steward, to fetch you. I have the papers here, the permission from the port authorities, and a letter from her to the captain. You have no time to land. If you will be so good as to get them to bring up what luggage you have ready, we will go at once by the way of the sea to Leixœs. The rest will follow by the next boat. The Senhora would have delayed her journey so as to

give the *menina* time to rest a little, but she has been ill—a bronchial attack—and the doctor is anxious to get her off to a warmer climate at once. She has provided all you want for the journey, but it will be well if you will kindly hasten a little."

Guida took the paper and turned away. It had been an unreasoned impulse which had moved her to betray the identity she had kept from Mollie to this man. It was true enough, the name Mollie bore was also hers in every particular. Donna Guilhermina was her grandmother also, she was as near of kin to her as Mollie herself—Mollie, who was to be the petted heiress, while she, the daughter of the outcast son, who in some dim way she did not even guess at, had disgraced his name, must work hard for a living. She must work and eat out her heart in vain longing, while a little, even, of the money which was her father's right, would give her the leisure she had never had—and more, much more, would surely gain the end for which she had come thither, prepared to fight and scheme, to go

almost any length since it meant more to her than life itself.

It had been a desperate venture, since she knew practically nothing of her father's family but its name and a few details she had been able to gather about the people to whom she was going and who bore it, too, at least in part. But on her first setting out, the meeting with Mollie had seemed a piece of good fortune almost incredible, and the growing friendship between them had served but to raise her hopes. A little longer, she had thought, and Mollie should know all, the link between them, her bitter past, and the future which still might be so bright. But now the time on which she had counted was taken from her and her secret was no longer. Why had she betrayed her name, she asked herself, as these thoughts whirled through her brain in the space of the few steps from the side of the steamer to the door of the saloon? And with the question came the answer, too. It had been an unreasoned impulse, true, but it had had a purpose; an idea which had sprung suddenly into her mind with the old

man's words and the chance, the unexpected, unhoped-for chance, which they had offered.

She paused, the paper and the letter in her hand, on the threshold of the saloon. If the captain were there and she could give it to him, of course, there was nothing to be done but to fetch Mollie as hastily as might be. If he were not——

With a beating heart she drew back the curtain. He was not there. But in the cabin she found Mrs. Sullivan, busily packing Mollie's bag.

"That careless child!" she said as Guida entered. "They may come for her the moment we stop and she has nothing ready."

Guida picked up her own neat valise and small handbag. They were ready; there had never been anyone to make up for her small negligences, she thought a trifle bitterly.

"The steward will take that up if you call him," said Mrs. Sullivan, "or one of the sailors. What is that you say?"

Guida had put down the permit and the letter on the edge of the dressing-shelf.

"Papers for the captain? Oh, my dear, they overwhelm him with papers every time he enters port. Put it down on the saloon table as you pass, there's a good girl. He's somewhere with the Customs man in the hold, I believe; but he'll be up in a minute."

Guida carried out her bag and the valise. There was a good deal of strength in her slight-looking frame. Then she came back for the papers.

"She had a chance of looking," she said to herself. "She might have looked."

But Mrs. Sullivan was too busy with her packing. Guida put the two papers down beside the blotter on the table in the saloon. She had a moment's hesitation as to whether she would leave them open, or hide them under the others. It might make all the difference. A movement in Lucy Hamer's cabin reminded her of a new danger, and she compromised by folding the letter in the permit and putting them both under the paperweight. Then she took up her things and moved resolutely up to the deck.

She found the steward staring anxiously

up at the steamer. One of the sailors, a Portuguese, hung over the rail and exchanged talk with him. Guida felt her heart give a great leap of apprehension. But it appeared their talk had been of the voyage and its trials.

"And you are lucky to be in port," the old man was saying, "for they say that there is worse to come, but there——"

He broke off at the sight of Guida, and the sailor politely picked up her valise and carried it down into the boat.

"Muitissimo obrigado, Senhora," said he, delighted at the tip she gave him, and then as he loosened the rope which held the boat:

"Vae com Deus, amigos: go with God."

The boat fell astern, and the steamer swept on. In an instant, the current and the oars aiding, they were a dozen yards away. Guida drew a deep breath. The widening strip represented more than a mere stretch of water. It was her Rubicon. For a moment, as Mollie's face when she learned her treachery—the pretty girlish face with the frank blue eyes—rose before her, her heart smote her; but she set her teeth firmly.

Had she not been prepared to plot and scheme? This was barely even acting a lie. The men bent to their oars. The boat shot over the water, past the sandy point where the fishermen, their bare brown legs in the water, were gathering their scattered load into flat baskets, fastened one at each end of a long pole for convenience in carrying over the shoulder. And then they were out in the open sea, where the fragile little boat rocked ominously in the great breakers rolling up to the bar. The steward, Saturnino Bandeira he had told her was his name, clung nervously to the sides of the boat, but Guida had no leisure for fear. Her mind was still in a whirl of hope and remorse when they turned in at the opening of the port between the curved sea-walls. A big steamer, flying the Blue Peter at her masthead, was getting under weigh as they drew up alongside. Guida had hardly time to scramble up the side when the boat began to move.

"*A Deus, a Deus!*" cried Saturnino, waving his hand. "Till the spring, if God wills it."

She waved back, and then turned to meet the smiling face of an elderly servant dressed neatly in black, with a bright-checked silk handkerchief on her head.

"The Senhora is waiting for you in her cabin, *menina,*" she said. "How lucky that you were in time! A little more and you would have missed us."

Mollie would have missed, thought Guida, Mollie could not have been got off in time. It was herself or neither of them. The thought braced her for the coming meeting, and she moved toward the cabin with a firm step and a smiling face which belied the quaking of her heart. But the old lady who looked up as she came in was not as formidable as she had imagined. There were even tears in the piercing black eyes as they turned to hers.

"Diogo's child, my son's child," she whispered, as Guida bent over her hand to kiss it in Portuguese style before kissing her cheek. Then she rose and putting a hand on either shoulder drew her toward the light.

"You are like him," she said after a long

look; "yes, like him, but less than you were as a child. Is it the journey which has made you so pale? They told me you were fresh and rosy, as your mother when she won his heart."

Guida flushed crimson under her look.

"Ah, that is better. You are like him; yes, but—but—well, well! My son's child, his only child! We must hold together, Mollie, we must hold together, we two. Of all the ancient line of Alvarengas of Freamunde, we are the only ones left."

CHAPTER VI

AMONG HER OWN

THE *Guadiana* came to a stop and anchored opposite the Custom House. The Douro makes a great bend just before reaching the town, which lies a couple of miles inland from the sea, so that the stretch from Masserellos where it, properly speaking, begins, to the great double bridge which spans the river both from the lower banks and the heights above, resembles rather a lake than an estuary. Mollie could not take her eyes from the scene around her. On the one hand the gray old city, with its spires and towers rising terrace above terrace to the weather-worn block of the Cathedral and episcopal palace, on the other the less rugged heights of Villa Nova da Gaya, a town new in the days of the Moorish king, from which it is said to derive its name, with tiers of deep rose-colored wine-lodges, and above them all,

beside the bridge, the round church of the old Convent of the Serra, now an artillery barracks. It was from here that, a hundred years ago, Wellington looked down on the city, then held by Soult, and carried out his plans for expulsing the French, plans which succeeded so well that he and his officers were in time to eat in the evening the banquet prepared the same morning for the French marshal and his staff.

"Come," said Sybil at last, "they will soon be here to meet us and take us off. I have several things to get ready, and I shall not be sorry for a cup of tea."

Mollie woke up as from a dream.

"And I," she said, "I have all my things to pack. But it is so interesting, all the colors, those bright tiles on the houses flashing in the sun, the blue sky, the air, those noisy people down by the quays! I am so glad we have missed the other boat. I never thought that I should be so grateful to the fog before."

They were picking their way to the after-deck, when a shout from the water made Sybil turn her head.

"Ah, there's Fräulein," she said. "I knew she would come to meet me. She loves visiting steamers and never misses a chance. Good-morning, Fräulein," she went on, waving to the small boat in which sat a plump, cheerful-looking person with fair hair and eye-glasses, "how are you? We have arrived safely, you see."

"Ach, yes, thanks to God. I have been worried. They predicted such stormy weather, and you are two days late. Good to see you again."

She had scrambled up the ladder as she spoke, and now held Sybil in a warm embrace. Then she turned to Mollie. "And this will be the lady for the Alvarengas," she said. "They showed me your portrait. You must let me introduce myself, as we shall meet often—Fräulein Hertha Stark, at your service." She added a few words in German, while Mollie stared at her with a surprise which it seemed she shared.

"But do you not understand German?" she said. "Ach, no. But they told me you were long in Germany, in my own town, Bonn. The girls are so anxious to learn

German. They have begun with me, but I have not time enough. They will be much disappointed." Sybil came to the rescue with an explanation of Mollie's identity.

"Ach so," said Fräulein Stark. "I beg your pardon! But you are very like the portrait, and the governess is expected to-day."

"And she is here," said Sybil. "Miss Moore. She will be below, I suppose."

Then she looked a little curiously at Mollie, noting for the first time the likeness which had caused Fräulein Stark's mistake, and wondering that she had not noticed it before. They went down into the saloon, where breakfast had been spread, and found Lucy Hamer already installed at the table.

"But where is Miss Moore?" asked Fräulein, after they had exchanged greetings. "I am so anxious to make her acquaintance, as we shall meet so often."

"And as you are dying to have a little chat in German and hear news of the Fatherland," said Lucy. "She is not far off, I expect. I heard her go up on deck not much more than half an hour ago."

"But she is not there," said Fräulein Hertha, and would have pursued the subject but for Lucy's interrupting her with half a dozen questions concerning matters in the town. She satisfied her curiosity and then returned to her inquiry as if nothing had come between. "Where is Miss Moore?"

"Miss Moore! Here are some people to meet you!" It was Mrs. Sullivan's voice from the doorway. She stood aside to let two girls, a small boy and a tall, thin gentleman pass her. He looked round the table, bowed amiably to the other three, and made with outstretched hand for Mollie, who sat alone on her side.

"Mademoiselle, I presume?" he said in French. "I am so glad you have arrived safely. We have been very anxious about you, especially as more bad weather is coming. But I hear you had a pretty prosperous trip. Let me introduce my daughters——"

Mollie had taken his outstretched hand mechanically, unable to get a word in between the rapid flow of his speech. "This is

Maria Mafalda," he continued, turning to the girl who stood nearest, "my eldest daughter, and this is Maria da Soledade, the second one. I am sure you will soon be very good friends. My son, Nuno——"

Nuno, a dark-haired small boy of about seven, came forward and politely put up a chubby brown cheek to be kissed, looking at her the while out of a pair of roguish black eyes. Mollie kissed him very willingly, though in some bewilderment, and then went through the same ceremony with the two girls—Mafalda, tall and slim with dainty, clear-cut features, and a pair of bright brown eyes under the great waves of carefully arranged black hair; Soledade, smaller, and paler, with a thin, rather peevish face, and, as Mollie noticed when she moved, a slight limp.

"They are good children," continued their father, still giving her no time to speak, "but lazy as you will find, I fear! Still, they take great interest in languages, and——"

Mollie, in desperation, opened her mouth to explain, even at the cost of interrupting,

but Mrs. Sullivan came to her rescue. She had immediately, on ushering in the visitors, passed down the saloon to the cabin, evidently to look for Guida, and now stood on the threshold, looking surprised and even a little scared.

"Miss Moore?" she said. "I can not find her. *Where* can she be?" And then as the captain entered the saloon, "Tom, where is Miss Moore?"

"Miss Moore?" said the captain vaguely. "Miss Moore? Please take a seat, gentlemen." He motioned to the uniformed functionaries who accompanied him, and sat down between them at the end of the table opposite the inkstand and a pile of papers.

"Yes, Miss Moore," said Mrs. Sullivan in some vexation, "where is she?"

"Then it is not you?" said the younger of the two girls in English to Mollie. "Oh, but I am very sorry."

The captain had taken up the papers which lay on the table.

"What is this?" he asked suddenly. "'Licença . . . the steamer *Mariana,* leaving Leixœs at eight o'clock on the 22d of

November.' It is past nine now. But you have not gone, Miss Mollie?"

The fact was so obvious that Mollie merely stared at him in silence. But Fräulein Hertha put in a word now. "The *Mariana,*" she exclaimed. "That is the boat by which your grandmother is leaving, Donna Maria Margarida. She told us so yesterday when we went to say good-by."

"The *Mariana* is out of sight by now," said Soledade. "We saw her leave the port as we drove along the road from Boa Vista."

Mollie felt herself turn pale, while a sudden feeling of forlornness came over her. What did it all mean? Where was Guida?

The captain had opened the letter which lay inside the paper and was reading it with knitted brows. "Why was this not given to me?" he said, as he ended. "It is a letter from your grandmother, Miss Mollie, explaining that since, by the doctor's orders, she must on no account miss this boat, she begs me to send you off at once in charge of the old steward, Saturnino Bandeira, who would himself bring me this."

"Why, of course," exclaimed Sybil. "It was he whom I saw in that second boat just as we entered the river. I thought I knew him. I have often seen him at Freamunde."

"Then there *was* a second boat," said the captain. "I saw nothing of it, but it would seem as if Miss Moore has left in it, and is, no doubt, at present on her way to Madeira. I can not understand how the mistake arose."

"If it was a mistake," said Mrs. Sullivan. She remembered the curious, subdued excitement on the girl's face as she came to fetch her bag.

"Oh," exclaimed Mollie. "It must have been! I can not believe that Guida—Miss Moore——"

"Is her name Guida, too?" asked Lucy, suddenly.

"Why do you say 'too'?" asked Mollie. "Her name is Guida."

"Or Margarida, then. It is the same thing, you know. Then after all that book I picked up may have been hers—a book of Portuguese verse. There was the name 'Maria Margarida Moura de Alvarenga'

on the fly-leaf, and I naturally thought it was yours. I had just put it down again when she came up, took it up hastily, and carried it away into the cabin. I thought it rather rude of her to take it so obviously out of my reach, even if you had lent it to her; but I suppose now that it was her own property."

"But why?" said Mrs. Sullivan. "Her name is not Moura, and she knows no Portuguese."

"I think she does, and that it is," answered Lucy. "I was in my berth just now and had managed to open the port-hole a little, when I heard the scrape of a boat against the side, and a man's voice inquiring for you, Miss Mollie, by name. I heard a girl's voice answering: 'Yes, I am Maria Margarida' and the rest, and took it for yours, and was surprised to hear you speaking Portuguese so easily. It must have been hers. Your voices are as much alike as your faces."

"But *you* are Maria Margarida, Donna Guilhermina's grandchild," exclaimed Sole-

dade. "Then you are our cousin. Father, this is our cousin."

She explained matters in a few rapid sentences to her father, who had evidently not been able to follow the discussion in English, and he now turned to Mollie with a beaming smile.

"Then Donna Guilhermina's loss is our gain," he said taking her hand, "and whatever may be the explanation of the strange conduct of this other lady, it will at least give us the pleasure of your company, my dear little cousin. Welcome with all my heart to your father's land."

He shook her hand with great warmth and friendliness, while the two girls renewed their embraces. "Nuno," cried his father, "Nuno, come here!"

Nuno did not respond, and his sister, limping toward the door, found him performing a *pas seul* with a beaming countenance in the narrow passage outside.

"Oh, Soledade," he cried delightedly, "how nice she is, our new governess. What fun we shall have!"

"She is not our new governess at all,"

said Soledade, and then, laughing at the sudden clouding of the radiant little face: "She is our cousin, Maria Margarida Moura. Come and give her a kiss."

Nuno came willingly enough.

"How jolly," he said; "it will be even nicer to have her for a cousin than a governess, because there will not be any lessons, only fun. How delighted Alegria will be! Father, please let us go home quick. I want to show her to Alegria."

"Certainly, my son. If the captain will be so kind as to make quite sure that Miss Moore has left the ship, there will be no reason for our not doing the same. We breakfast at eleven," he went on, turning to Mollie, "and even though it takes a certain time to get through the Custom House with your luggage, we can easily be home before then."

"Do show us your cabin," said Mafalda, slipping her arm through Mollie's, "I have never been on one of these boats."

She spoke Portuguese, using the familiar "thou" customary among near relatives. Mollie felt, with a sudden leap of her heart,

that after all, whatever had happened, she was at last in her father's land and among her father's people.

But later, when the Custom House had been safely passed with very little trouble, and she sat in the roomy, handsome motor-car beside Senhor Alvarenga, she came back to the question which had been puzzling her brain all along. How did Guida Moore come to be her namesake, and why had she taken her place?

Her cousin looked grave. "As to who she is, I can only guess," he said, "but supposing her name to be really the same, and judging from the resemblance every one speaks of, I think that my guess is likely to be the true one, she must be Alvaro's daughter. Alvaro was your father's brother, my dear, his elder brother. I remember once hearing a rumor of his having married in America. Probably the rumor was a true one—it would be just like him to entangle himself in some such way, and then shirk his responsibilities. Heaven forgive me for speaking so of the dead, but if this young lady is really an Alvarenga, surely

she is no other than Alvaro's daughter. *Bon chien chasse de race,* you know."

"She had a very hard childhood," said Mollie. "She told me that she had to work for herself almost as long as she could remember."

"Likely enough. Alvaro died little more than a few months after Diogo, your father. She would be only about ten at the time, I suppose. But that hardly justifies her conduct."

"But I was such a coward" said Mollie, "always grumbling about the second voyage. Might it not be a thought of kindness——"

Senhor Alvarenga smiled. "My dear little cousin," he said, "if I had no other proof than that speech I should know at once which of the two brothers can claim you as his daughter. You forget that Donna Guilhermina is a rich woman, and has so far as I know, no idea that she has a second granddaughter. But if interest was her motive, Maria Margarida number two might have spared herself the voyage. She will, in any case, be rich enough; for Por-

tuguese law allows the testator only the free disposal of a third of his property. When direct heirs are present the remainder must go to them."

Mollie sighed. The motor-car was spinning along the splendid road which follows the curves of the river from the town to the sea between the edge of trees on its banks and the high gray cliffs on the inner side, the same road Mollie had seen from the steamer not an hour before. The seagulls still screamed and swooped over the few remaining sardines as they rounded the corner opposite the sandy point and passed in between the gardens and the row of gay-colored houses running their whole length. The sea beyond the fringe of palms sparkled gloriously in the sunshine, but Mollie saw it through a veil which dimmed its brightness. There must be some explanation, she thought, and could find none.

Then the motor, turning at a right angle, left behind it the road which ran now between bare fields and the low, rocky beach, and entered a broad avenue bordered with a double row of trees and stretching end-

lessly ahead into a vague vista of buildings with the double towers of a church rising against the sky at the extreme end.

"This is the Avenida of Boa Vista," explained Senhor Alvarenga. "It runs from the sea right up into the heart of the city. But our house is on the outskirts. We shall be there in a few minutes now."

The fields, interspersed with woods of thin pine-trees, gave way to gardens and villas. Presently the car stopped before a gate set in a high wall, and a moment later Mollie found herself on the steps of a large and handsome house, with green-tiled walls gleaming brightly in the sun and many windows set in frames of glistening gray granite.

CHAPTER VII

GUIDA WRITES

MOLLIE sat in a comfortable cane chair beside the open window and sunned herself drowsily. She had made the acquaintance of her cousin's wife, Donna Carlotta, and already felt quite at home with that kindly, cheerful lady, who had received her with open arms and helped to put her quite at her ease by telling her that she knew her grandfather and had been a friend of her mother's as well as a playfellow of her father's. She had been duly "shown" by Nuno to his nine-year-old sister, Maria da Alegria, and as warmly accepted by that young person as she had been by her brother. Then after breakfast she had spent some time unpacking with the help of the girls and the servant Gracinda, and put away her things in the old-fashioned press and chest of drawers. And now they had left her to herself to rest a while—"be-

cause we are going to pass the night at my aunt's house," Soledade had explained, and then, seeing Mollie's astonished look: "The evening, I should say," she had corrected herself hastily. "I am always making that mistake because it is *'noite'* in Portuguese."

And so Mollie sat in the sunshine—they had pulled down the blind, but once alone she had pulled it up again, looking out at the view beyond the trees, the green expanse with the Atlantic for limit, and then back to her own little domain, the room which had been prepared for Guida.

A charming room she found it, with its creamy walls and cretonne curtains sprinkled over with purple anemones. The floor was covered with white matting, and contrasted with the heavy, old-fashioned furniture in very dark wood, decorated with highly garnished rococo wreaths in low relief and brass handles and locks, and the elaborately embroidered covers and towels and sheets in rather uneven but very white linen.

"The flax was grown by our farmers years ago," Soledade had explained, "and then

prepared by their wives and spun and paid in as part of the rent. Women go round and collect the thread and then weave so much linen in return. Then after it has been well bleached out on the grass in the sun, in the long free afternoons in the country, the maids used to sit together and work these festoons and these endless holes. They call it *broderie anglaise* now, but it is really Portuguese, you know," she had ended in a slightly aggrieved tone.

A vase with three delicately tinted pink tea-roses stood on the corner of the dressing-table, and there were some freshly growing green creeping plants in pots on the upper edge of the washstand. The sunlight lay in a great golden band across the white floor and the foot of the ancient bed, narrow and none too long, all carved and varnished like the rest, and of a hardness such as Mollie had never experienced. It was more restful in the chair, she had decided after trying it, and so she sat there, half-asleep in the comfortable warmth, remembering with a kind of vague wonder that not a week before she had left London

plunged in dreary fog, and still a week before that had seen the last of dear old Rathmor, all gray and black in the twilight through a veil of falling rain.

How would Rathmor look under this glowing blue sky, she wondered. She tried dreamily to picture it, and succeeded so well that presently she was walking about the Long Bog in the sunshine, and there were primroses everywhere and a great feathery mimosa, like the one outside, which already showed every branch full of tiny yellow balls, hung over the deep black pool which tradition said was bottomless. Then, all at once, as she stood looking into its depths, Guida was beside her.

"Listen," she said, "they are hammering his coffin." Mollie turned at the sound of her voice, started, and awoke; but the hammering continued. Some one was knocking at the door.

"Come in," she cried. *"Entre!"*

The door was slowly opened, and the brown, good-humored face of the maid, Gracinda, appeared.

"Disculpa, menina," she said, and held

out a folded note at arm's length. She added some words which Mollie could not understand. Gracinda tried again; then shaking her head, rushed out of the room, and presently appeared with Alegria. "Now, *menina,*" she said, pushing her forward, "you explain."

"She says," translated Alegria, "that a man from Leixœs brought this note, a friend of the pilot who took out the *Mariana.* Do you want to see him, and what is she to say?"

Mollie took the scrap of paper and unfolded it. A few words in pencil were signed by the name she had thought her own exclusive possession.

"I can guess what you are thinking," they ran, "but, if you knew all, you would not only condemn but pity, too. Mollie, let me have just this one chance. More depends on it than you can guess. If there had been time I'd have been open with you, but there was no time. Do not judge me too hardly till you know all."

Mollie put down the paper. "Thank the

man," she said, "and I suppose he must be paid. How much shall I give him?"

"Oh, about five hundred reis," said Alegria. It sounded a fortune, but the silver piece she presently extracted from Mollie's purse for her was only the size and value of an English florin. "He will be quite content with that and a mug of wine," she said sagely, as she ran off, Gracinda behind her, and Mollie was left once more alone.

She sat down in her chair again, but the spell of dreamy drowsiness was broken. The sun had shifted, and the air was growing chilly, so she shut the window and sat down by the table with the note spread out before her, her thoughts busy with the writer.

"If you knew all." What was the "all"? What was the story of that sad, hard young life, of which she had had a few brief glimpses?

Mollie thought of her own love-guarded days, of the brave memory which ten years after his death still earned her a welcome for her father's sake, and could not find it in her heart to judge too harshly one who neither in the past nor the present had any

nearer than herself to hold out a friendly hand.

Again a knock at the door disturbed her meditations, but this time it was Soledade.

"Come and have some tea," she said. "It is all ready in our room. Dinner is not till six, you know."

Mollie followed her obediently across the hall. The room was on the same floor, but the windows looked inland across a varied prospect of fields and houses toward the town. It was a large and airy and somewhat bare room, papered in gray and pink, with a carpet and curtains to match, and except for the big dressing-table between two windows, was furnished almost as a sitting-room. A lace curtain hanging across a deep recess hid the two narrow beds. Here, too, the perfect order and regularity which Mollie had already noticed in the drawing-room gave at first sight the impression that the room was not in use, but on the center table the albums had been pushed aside to give space for a small tray, on which stood

a tea-pot, a sugar-bowl, some cups, and a plate of small round cakes covered with white sugar.

"I forgot to ask you," said Soledade. "I suppose you prefer black tea to green?"

"Oh, yes, thanks," said Mollie, taking the dainty china cup she held out, and looking about half mechanically for the cream-jug.

Mafalda pushed the sugar-bowl, half full of powdered sugar, toward her, but Soledade had noticed the look.

"Oh, perhaps you take milk," she said. "I do hope they have some left. I will tell Gracinda to go and see."

"What will you have, Mafalda?" she went on. "Tea as well?"

"No, thanks; I only want water, *agua chalada.* Gracinda, bring me a glass of water, please."

Mollie watched with interest the mixture she made when Gracinda presently returned with the glass of water and a small quantity of hot milk in a beautiful little silver jug. After pouring away about a quarter of the water, Mafalda added tea to the rest till it became a deep straw color,

sugared it to taste, and then proceeded to drink it off with every sign of satisfaction.

"Try a cake," said Soledade, who, though the younger of the two, seemed to have taken it upon herself to do the honors, perhaps because Mafalda's English was too shaky for much use. "Gracinda's mother brought these yesterday. It is the sort of thing you find in all the country places."

"Gracinda comes from quite near your grandmother's *quinta,*" said Mafalda, in French, which came more easily to her than English. "She has only been here a week and was never in a town at all before. The first days she wanted to know the name of every one who passed the house, and was quite astonished when no one could tell her. Now, she is getting more used to it, but she can not yet understand how it is that we can talk gibberish, as she calls it, and yet each make out what the other is saying."

"She can neither read nor write," said Soledade. "It is not that there are no schools, you know. There are schools all over the country, and people are bound by

law to send their children to them. But the parents say that they got on all right without learning and can not spare the children from the fields, and the masters will not insist, because the best part of what they live on is made up of the presents from the parents. Some people, your grandmother among them, give prizes every year—so much for the best pupils to the children, and so much to the masters—so that the schools at Freamunde are really schools. But Gracinda comes from another parish. She is sorry enough now that she has not learned. Yesterday she got a letter from her *noivo*—her young man, you know—who has gone out to Rio, and she had to wait all the afternoon till we came home to read it to her and then to write the answer. He does not like the idea of other people reading his tender speeches, so that he writes so stiffly that she was in tears all the evening."

"Well, I do not blame him," said Mafalda, looking slightly conscious. "Who would like to have one's love-letters read aloud?"

She looked at Mollie, as if awaiting her opinion.

"I am sure I should not, if ever I had had such a thing," said Mollie, seeing that an answer was expected.

"Oh, but you do not mean that you really never have?" said Mafalda, her own eyes wandering with evident pride to the chest of drawers which was her own especial domain, and the top drawer of which, by an ingenious arrangement Mollie had already admired in her own room, pulled out and opened down into a neatly fitted and very complete writing-table. But Soledade did not give Mollie the time to formulate the remark which Mafalda was evident eagerly awaiting.

"It is really very tiresome for Gracinda," she said.

"Well," suggested Mollie, "the only remedy seems to me that she should learn now. It need not be a very long business if she is willing."

"And I could teach her," said Soledade eagerly. "That is an excellent idea. I am always longing to get a chance of doing

something really useful. "Gracinda," she went on, turning to the girl, who was removing the tray; "shall I teach you to read?"

Gracinda's dark eyes lighted up with pleasure.

"Oh, if the *menina* was so good," she said, "but it will be such a trouble."

"No, not if you take pains. We will begin to-morrow."

"As the *menina* likes. It is too kind. Let it be for the good of the souls of those whom God has taken."

She moved across the room as she spoke and put a match to the gas.

"May God give us a good night," she said, as the light flared up in the Auer burner.

"Amen," said the girls. Then, as Gracinda drew down the blinds and shut out the rapidly-falling twilight, Soledade pulled out her watch.

"How quickly the time has gone," she said. "It is past five, time for us to think of getting ready for this evening."

CHAPTER VIII

COUSIN LUIZ

IN THE few minutes of waiting for dinner to be announced, Mollie showed the note she had received that afternoon to her cousin and his wife.

"It seems to me that for the present there is nothing we can do except what she asks," said Senhor Alvarenga. "The *Mariana* is a slow boat, and will take at least five days to reach Funchal, with the weather which threatens probably more, so that not even a telegram——"

"Oh, not a telegram," said Mollie. "One can not explain properly, and besides——"

"A telegram is too public as well as too brusk," put in Donna Carlotta. "Margarida is quite right. But the next mail does not leave for ten days, so we have time to think things over. Meanwhile, there is the gong, and punctual as usual to the minute—our second guest, Luiz Valladares

Gouveia, another cousin, Margarida, my dear. Or, if not strictly a cousin, a kinsman of sorts, and a very good friend of ours."

"To tell the truth, it was not necessary to introduce us to each other," said the newcomer, a few minutes later to Mollie, when they were sitting side by side at the dinner-table. "We are old friends, you know."

Mollie looked up in surprise, to meet the smiling glance of a pair of dark eyes. "Oh, you have forgotten, no doubt. It is ten, let me see, nearly eleven years ago—but we were friends, the best of friends."

He spoke English with no trace of an accent, but now he dropped into Portuguese, a slow, careful Portuguese, which she understood without difficulty. "Have you quite forgotten, *menina* Margarida, whose busy little hands used to be so clever at finding the caramels stowed away in her big friend's pockets? Have you forgotten the *primo Luiz,* on whose horse you used to ride up and down the avenue of beeches at Freamunde?"

Mollie had put down her spoon, leaving

her soup almost untasted, and was listening like one in a dream. Now she turned to him with eyes that shone with an eager light under the long, dark lashes.

"Primo Luiz!" she repeated, "and a horse, a big black horse—my father's were both gray; yes, and a gun. You used to go shooting with him. Oh, I remember, and once you brought me a tiny rabbit, alive. I used to give it lettuce, till one day a cat stole it, a wild cat out of the wood, and I cried; I remember."

"And I wiped your eyes and promised you another the very next time I went shooting with your father."

"And you never brought it."

"There was no next time," he answered, in a low voice, and there was silence between them for a moment. But Mollie's mind was busy with the past.

"There was a garden," she said, "and a hedge of geranium, and a big bush of lavender with a wall beyond, an old gray wall, all covered with moss and tiny yellow roses over the top of it—a gray house (not ours, because ours was white), with old

carved stones all stained and yellow. That must have been your house."

"Yes," he said, "that was my house. That was Thelude."

His tone was so sad that Mollie looked at him in wonder, but Donna Carlotta interrupted any further questions by an exclamation of dismay.

"Margarida, you are eating nothing! Do you not like chicken and rice? Cypriano, bring me the dish and I will pick out a nice bit for the *menina*. The sea-voyage ought to have given you more appetite, my dear."

But when she had, to Donna Carlotta's satisfaction, disposed of her portion of boiled chicken and its underlying layer of saffron-flavored rice, Mollie came back to the memories of the past which her neighbor's words had roused to full activity.

"Thelude," she repeated, half to herself. "I remember now. I used to go there often and often with my mother to see yours, who was an invalid——"

She paused, afraid to ask the question which he answered for her.

"Yes, an invalid," he said; "she is that

still, alas. You must go and see her with Cousin Carlotta one of these days. She will love to talk over old times."

"Then she lives here in the town?" asked Mollie.

"Yes," he answered. "We had to leave Thelude. There are no doctors there, you know, and, besides, I have my work. We have been nearly ten years now in Porto."

"Now, Margarida, you really must try some of this roast beef," said Donna Carlotta. Mollie had half-unconsciously refused the dish which the old servant, Cypriano, had insinuated at her elbow, and which, far from being rebuffed by her refusal, he continued to hold there, while with an appealing look, he had drawn his mistress's attention to the guest's empty plate. Encouraged now by her words, he carefully picked out a tempting piece and laid it on her plate, supplementing it with gravy, and then, with the air of one who had worthily performed a necessary duty, moved on to give place to his subordinate with the potatoes and the salad.

"And you must try our pudding, Mar-

garida," said Mafalda. "It is a new recipe, but I think it will be a success. I suppose you know how to make all sorts of cakes and puddings."

Mollie, looking in some surprise at the fashionable young cousin she had not suspected of any skill in puddings, was obliged to confess that she only knew how to make scones and griddle-cakes.

"Oh, yes, and trifle with whipped cream," she added, remembering the triumphant success of a holiday experiment made by the first class at the Dublin convent.

"Oh, yes; I know," said Soledade. "The English and the Germans here have it sometimes at their parties. But it is difficult to get cream enough. The milk here is not rich like yours in the North."

"No, I suppose not," said Mollie. She would have preferred to continue to talk about old days to her neighbor, but now that she had got her attention, Soledade seemed to be anxious to keep it. She was looking almost pretty this evening, Mollie noticed. Her heavy hair was parted on one side in a less formal but more pic-

turesque style than Mafalda's; her pale blue dress, daintily made and faultlessly fitting, threw up the pure whiteness of her skin, faintly flushed now; her dark eyes shone almost too brightly, thought her cousin, turning from her talk to Luiz to meet their gaze fixed with feverish eagerness on her.

"Yes, it is very nice, indeed," said Mollie amiably, as she laid down her spoon after tasting the pudding—a luscious compound consisting apparently of eggs and sugar. But, though Mafalda smiled with gratified pride, the anxious scrutiny of her sister's look did not relax. There was an expression almost of anger on her face, Mollie fancied, though when dinner had ended, and they all stood up and, after saying grace, turned to greet each other, her kiss was even warmer than Mafalda's.

"A very good evening," said Luiz, holding out his hand.

"Muitas boas noites," said the children, putting up their faces to her for a kiss. They had begun with their parents, kissing first their hand and then their cheek and receiv-

ing a caress in return. Mollie was surprised to see Alegria take her cousin's hand and kiss it too. "My godchild, you know," explained Luiz. "I expect you lost all these good old customs in England?"

"Yes," said Mollie. A lump had come into her throat as the memory awoke of the last time she, a little girl like Alegria, had held her father's warm brown fingers to her childish lips, one evening at bedtime, the last evening of her happy, untroubled childhood.

An hour later, sitting in the back seat of the big covered motor-car between the two girls, her thoughts returned again to that time, trying to detach from its vague mistiness some clearer details of the figure which a single meeting had made so familiar, that she wondered how she could so completely have let the memory of him become part of the past. But the effort was vain. The age-worn house, the black horse, the rabbit, even a dark-haired boy who played with her, these she remembered, but when she tried to picture him, the face of the present-day Luiz blotted out the one of

long ago, the pale face, with its sad eyes and the heavy mustache half hiding a mouth which had surely never had, in those merry, far-off days, curves so grave and lines so deep.

"Why, how old can he be, Cousin Luiz?" she said, half aloud; but not too low to be heard by her neighbors.

"Oh, I do not know," said Mafalda; "quite old—over thirty, at any rate."

"He was twenty-eight his last birthday on the twenty-fifth of August," said Soledade, with grave exactitude.

"Then he was only eighteen when I used to know him," said Mollie. "He must have changed a great deal. I can not remember his face."

"Oh, no; he has not changed much," said Mafalda. "He is always the same, rather solemn and serious, but very good-natured, and a very useful sort of cousin to have. I always feel much safer in the car when he is driving. Our chauffeur is sometimes so reckless."

"Of course he has changed," said Soledade. "Donna Guiomar has a photograph

of him taken about ten years ago, and you would hardly know it was the same person at all. He has changed tremendously."

"Oh, well, I suppose he has," said Mafalda, indifferently. "I do wish Tia Alcina would let us have some dancing, but I suppose it will be the same thing as usual."

The car slowed down as she spoke, and took up its place in a file of waiting carriages outside a tall and somewhat gaunt-looking house, whose tiled front gleamed metallically in the light of their great lamp.

They got out in their turn, and passed through a bare and very cold stone hall furnished only with an oak bench and some bamboos in pots, and then up a handsome staircase. The little room where they left their wraps was filled to overflowing with ladies and girls, all cousins and aunts, it seemed to Mollie, catching over and over again the words *tia* and *prima,* and quite unable to remember the names belonging to the smiling faces with the dark eyes and hair, all alike, it seemed to her in her bewilderment.

There were more of them in the big saloon, sitting in groups and trios on the heavy damask and gilt chairs ranged along the walls. Donna Carlotta led Mollie toward the sofa, where their elderly hostess sat surrounded by a number of ladies of her own generation, all in rich, rustling silk dresses made high to the throat, but serving as a background to the most magnificent jewels.

"And this is the little cousin who managed to lose her boat," said Donna Alcina, to whom Donna Carlotta had explained in the way they had agreed upon Mollie's unexpected presence in her house, an explanation she had to repeat many times that evening, when the event in all its bearings formed one of the chief subjects of the family conversation.

Donna Alcina looked curiously at Mollie as she gave her her hand, as if seeking a likeness, and then smiled with some satisfaction.

"She is like her father, after all," he said; "a true Alvarenga, all but the eyes, which are too dark a blue. But then so

were his. Let us hope you are like him in other ways too, my dear child," she went on, turning again to Mollie. "You can not hope for a finer inheritance."

Mollie felt her heart warm with that little glow of joyous pride which had been kindled in it more than once that day, and which, better than anything else so far, kept the homesickness which had tormented her on the boat at bay. But, in spite of the kindness and warmth with which she was welcomed and made at home among the crowd of unknown relatives, Mollie was glad enough when, a few hours later, in spite of protestations on the part of their hostess, Donna Carlotta made her farewells and carried off her party. Mollie had grown tired enough of sitting on her high-backed chair between two girl-cousins, while one after another went to the piano and played or sang, discreetly applauded by the group of men who, except for a few elders, kept strictly together near the door, and much praised by the older ladies, who rarely omitted to reward the performance with a kiss. There had been recitations, too,

and a childish dialogue in French performed by two small grandchildren of their hostess. Then there were refreshments—cups of tea and glasses of water and of wine carried round by men in livery on great silver trays and other trays piled high with sweets in colored tissue paper much befrilled; and little cakes of almonds, eggs, and sugar; and preserved fruits. There had been ices, served in the same way, but the time had seemed very long to Mollie, and she was not sorry to make her good-bys all round and turn her back on the great bare room, with its chair-lined walls, the marble-topped consoles covered with priceless porcelain dating back to the days of Portugal's great power, side by side with modern German figures in colored bisque, and its big center table, a mass of flowers, roses and heliotropes and salvias.

"Oh, I do wish we could have danced," said Mafalda, as they sped homeward through the darkness. "It would have been such fun."

"*You* did not lose your time, at any rate,"

said Soledade, and with that somewhat enigmatic speech subsided again into the rather sulky silence she had kept since they left the house.

But Mollie hardly heeded her. Her thoughts were too busy with other things—with, to be quite exact, the cousin, whose strong handclasp as they said good-night she still felt in her own, and whose last words had been to remind her of her promise to visit his mother as soon as possible.

"It will be as great a pleasure to her to see you again, *priminha,* as it has been to me," he had said, with a smile which lit up all his grave young face, "and she has so few pleasures, you must not cheat her of that one."

"But it will be one to me, too," said Mollie earnestly. "Please tell her so from me."

And then they had shaken hands like the old friends they were, and the car had rushed off in the darkness down the smooth straight road which led from the heights of the city to the sea. The air was warm and a little clammy, and there were no stars.

"The wind is from the south," said Senhor Alvarenga. "We shall have rain to-morrow, and, if I am not mistaken, the storm which has been predicted for some time. If it is half as bad as they say, Miss Guida Moore, before long, will, I expect, be very sincerely regretting the success of her bold stroke of diplomacy and wishing herself safe on dry land again."

CHAPTER IX

GUIDA'S STORY

GUIDA MOORE had not waited till the bad weather came before regretting the hasty, half-unreasoned impulse which had led her to take her cousin's place. The deed had hardly become irrevocable before she regretted it, with a choking feeling of remorse and a sick, helpless longing for the moment of decision all over again.

"She is not as stiff as they said," she told herself, walking restlessly up and down the deck, almost the only passenger brave enough to confront the warm, rough wind beating up from the south, and the increased rolling of the ship. "And I am sure she would have been kind if she knew —but she has no idea—the only two left, she said. Oh, if there had been time to tell Mollie, to explain!"

There had been time enough in all truth, had she been able to conquer the cautious

reticence, which, indeed, it had not needed Miss Hamer's careless description of her grandmother's character to impress upon her, since her life itself had already taught it to her. A dreary life enough it showed up, as, pacing to and fro in the gathering dusk, she let her thoughts fly back over the past years to the earliest memories they held.

They were not, like Mollie's, of sunshiny places and kind, smiling looks, but there was some sweetness in them, too. There had been little sunshine in the small drab house in the dull suburban street of a busy New England town, with its narrow yard, where a clump of marigolds in a wooden box made the one patch of color in the grayness; but there had been the warmth of love, and there were memories no less precious than Mollie's. There had been hours, quiet evening hours, when her mother for a while laid aside her perpetual needlework, and, taking her on her knees, would draw the rocker close up beside the stove, and "be cosy." Guida would never forget the small, bare room, with its poor furniture and the

patch of warm color thrown by the open door of the stove on the floor, growing brighter as the dusk crept in through the window. Those were happy days, though she had not known it at the time, waiting always as she had been, with a child's eager impatience, for the bright future her mother would paint, in those short spaces of leisure she allowed herself during the falling twilight, the things that would be when her ship came home, "when your father returns from Europe, my darling."

Guida knew now how faint and fragile had been the hope which buoyed up the brave little mother's heart during the ten long years from her birth, to the day when indeed it was fulfilled, though not as they had pictured it. It had been a simple romance enough, that of her parents—beginning in a chance meeting at the farm boarding-house between the little school-teacher, who was spending a hard-earned fortnight's holiday, and the handsome foreigner, who spoke English almost like an Englishman, and whose light-blue eyes, which made such a striking contrast to his brown skin and

black lashes, could speak a language more eloquent still. He had come over from New York with a friend for the fishing, which was worth nothing; but that fact seemed to cause him little trouble, since he had found a pastime more absorbing for the long golden summer hours, which, for Maggie Blake, were passed in a garden of Eden. But it might have very well ended as so many summer romances end when the summer is over, with a parting and a little cluster of bitter-sweet memories for all result, had it not been for the friend.

A well-meant interference; a warning, which was intended to nip the foolish passion, and served but to fan its flame; a somewhat tactless effort to get the impressionable young stranger away before it was too late; and to Alvaro Moura's ill-balanced character, what had been at first little more than a pleasant interlude became the one absorbing object and aim of his existence. Three days after his friend's vain attempt to get him to break off his courtship, the young Portuguese gentleman, who could trace his ancestors back to the warlike

Gothic barons who had fought the Saracens in the valleys of the Minho before the days of Count Henry of Burgundy, was married in the little Catholic chapel, half a mile from the farm, to Maggie Blake, whose grandfather could hardly write his own name. Not that Maggie knew anything of the ancestors, nor the fortune which was fast wasting away under her husband's careless, reckless hands. For her in those few brief months of a breathless happiness such as she had never dreamed of, it was the man himself who filled all her heart, and whom she worshiped with an adoring love which no revelation of his many weaknesses could diminish, nor even the growing evidence of his waning passion. When at last the blow she was dreading fell, and he told her that business called him home for a time, of course, that same love could still blind her to the truth and keep her waiting with unshaken trust through the years for his return. One effort she had made to communicate with him, a year after his departure and six months after his child's birth. She had gone then to the Portuguese consul in

New York, and asked him if there was no means of sending word to her husband, who had never written as he had promised, and who did not yet know that he had a daughter. But the Consul was newly appointed, the name "Alvaro Moura," which was all she knew, very little guide in a country where the same names are repeated over and over again in fifty different combinations. He told her to call again, which she did more than once, with no other result than the making friends with the consul's old housekeeper, who sympathized with her trouble and was greatly taken with the child.

More than once she had little Maggie, or, as she called her, "Guida," on a visit, and when, with advancing years, she retired on her savings and came to live not far from her friends, it was to her that the little girl owed most of her childish treats, as well as her knowledge of her father's language.

Yes, there had been happy moments in those past years; gleams of sunshine all the brighter for the contrast with the grayness which followed. Looking out now and over

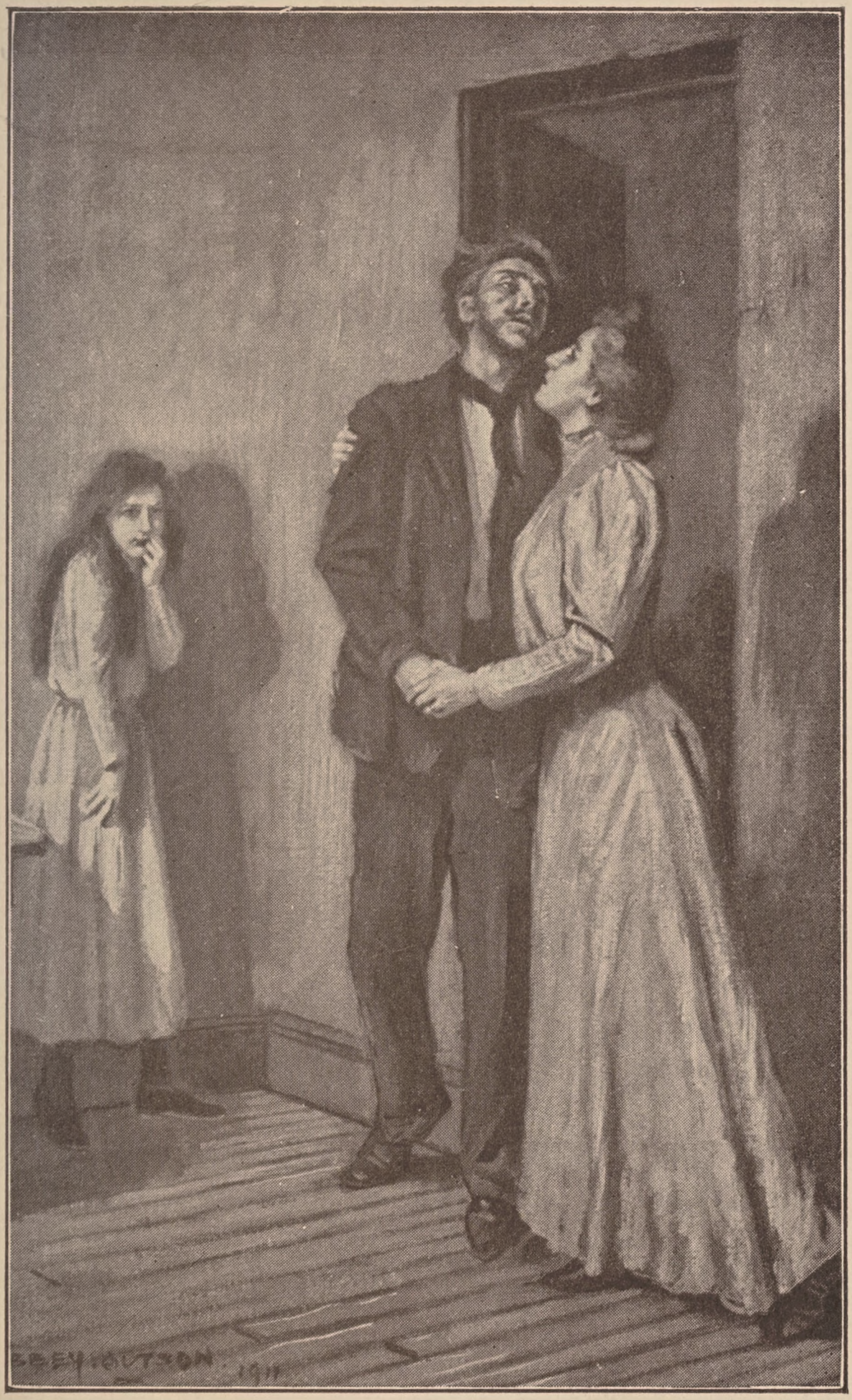
the darkening water, as she paced restlessly up and down the deck in the fast-falling winter twilight, Guida brought back to memory, with a clearness that hurt, the last evening she could remember sitting with her mother, both working in the hard, crude light of the cheap lamp—for she was clever enough with her needle at ten years old to help keep the wolf from the door. Which was lucky indeed, since hope deferred and failing strength were making the brave little mother's struggle a losing one. It had been a wild autumn evening, something like this one, when she paced up and down the deck in the gathering gloom, with great gusts of clammy, damp wind, which made the windows shake in their frames and the door rattle as if a hand were on the latch, so that when at last a hand was really laid there, it seemed to Guida only one more false alarm.

But not so to her mother. She had heard the faint knocking above the storm, and in a moment was out in the little hall and had flung the door wide. A great gust of wind entered, making the lamp flare high, while

the glass shattered and fell in fragments on the floor. In the sudden glare, the child saw a dark, white-faced form, which advanced with weary, dragging steps, and then a new gust came and blew out the light, leaving her in terror-stricken gloom.

That first glimpse was all she remembered clearly of her father's face. After that came a confused memory of dismay and fear, and a hasty running through the wild night for the doctor and their only friend, Senhora Luzia, who came hurrying at her tearful summons. It must have been barely a week, but to Guida it seemed an endless blank space, with no limits of day and night, before the sick man's terrible ravings ended in a silence which was more terrible still.

Then Senhora Luzia, who had watched day and night by the sick-bed, listening with a white face and close-shut lips to the piteous cries which she alone could understand, had taken her by the hand and led her into the room where her unknown father, whose coming was to have brought such happiness, lay white and still on his



"The child saw a dark, white-faced form."—*Page 122.*

pillow, and her mother, as white and hardly less still, sat beside him. With trembling fingers she took the bit of green box from the jar of holy water to sprinkle the quiet figure, and then stooping, kissed for the first and last time the cold hand upon his breast.

Guida kept no very clear memory of the weeks that followed. Her mother worked no more, only sat very quiet and still with folded hands in the rocking chair. Luzia was with them always; very kind, but more silent than she had been. They were all silent, for what was there to talk of now that the dream of the future was shattered? "But he came back to me in his trouble," Maggie said once, with a triumphant note in her weak voice. "He came home to me. He knew I would be waiting for him still."

"Yes," said Luzia, "he came back to you with his trouble."

Maggie did not notice the irony in her tone.

"If only he could have known about Guida," she went on. "I tried to tell him,

but he did not seem to understand. You will look after her?"

"Yes," answered the old lady, "I will look after Guida. Have no fear for her."

Guida knew that it was on a winter day that her mother died, because when she knelt beside her, listening to her slow, painful breaths, and waiting for the priest, who had been the day before, to come and bless the second deathbed, she could see through her tears the great flakes of snow whirling about on the other side of the small window-panes. That was the clearest memory which remained in her childish brain, half-stupefied with grief and dread of the black, unknown future.

But people had been kind. Senhora Luzia had taken her home, and for two years she had lived with her, busy with school and the little household tasks, which were all she could do in return for her friend's charity. It was really charity. The two illnesses had swallowed up the few hundred dollars which Alvaro Moura had brought back with him, and the small sum over from the sale of the furniture Sen-

hora Luzia had put in a savings-bank as a nest-egg for Guida's future, all she possessed beyond the few papers which had been her mother's, some photographs, and her father's pocket-book, empty except for a few odds and ends, and a cutting from a Portuguese newspaper, which announced the death of "Diogo Moura de Vasconcellos Alvarenga," and invited his relatives and friends, in the name of his widow, mother and daughter, to attend his funeral at the Caza of Freamunde, near Penafiel. This the old lady had handed over to her on the eve of her leaving for Europe, where a place had been found for her *au pair* in a Belgian convent.

The name had struck her at once, and she had asked Luzia if they might not be her relatives, who had answered with manifest reluctance that it was possible—even probable, she allowed at last, in response to the girl's eager probing.

"But then why do you not write to them, or ask the consul to?" said Guida quickly.

"It was not your father's wish to have any communication with his family," said

old Luzia, and had finally to give her reasons.

"My dear, your father is dead. He died repentant, and God has judged him, whatever his failings, of which I can not tell you anything, seeing that I know nothing beyond what he himself betrayed in his ravings. But I can tell you that he had a reason for wishing to cut himself off from his family, and it seems to me that while you have strength and energy to make your own way, you should respect it."

Guida was silenced, but not convinced.

"My father might have his reasons as far as he himself was concerned," she thought, "but not for *me*. He did not even realize that he had a daughter. One day I will go to Portugal and see for myself."

The resolution had helped her through many a dreary, homesick hour in the Belgian convent, all the more as time went on and the death of her old friend left her absolutely alone in the world. The thought of a home and of kin, people of her own race and blood, even if strangers and in a far-away land, kept always a warm little

glow in her lonely heart. But the more she clung to the thought, the more the consideration that the reason of her father's exile might be one which would make his daughter an unwelcome intruder in the family which had cast him out, began to weigh with her, till the resolution she had made in the first impulse of youth wavered and weakened before the fear of losing, by facing reality, the dream-refuge which was so precious to her in her many dreary hours. And, indeed, had it not been for an entirely new motive, which suddenly overpowered all other considerations, it is probable that she would have respected what Luzia declared would have been her father's wish, and no one would have known in his old home that Alvaro Alvarenga had left a daughter.

It was during her second year in Germany that Guida met John Martyn, a young doctor who had come over from England to study some special branches of science under the well-known German doctor in whose daughter's house she boarded while giving her daily lessons at the school

not far away. The acquaintance, begun in the pleasant family evenings, which were to Guida a glimpse into a world she had never known, soon grew and ripened into love—a love into which the lonely girl put all the strength of her starved heart, till its force and fire surprised her. On the other hand, to John Martyn, very clever, very poor, and very laborious, the thought of love and marriage had lain among the dreams which for the present could never be anything more, till he met, in the pale-faced, black-haired girl, whose life had been even lonelier than his own, the realization of them all.

With the hope of a new home, the far-away Southern one became vaguer than ever, till one day, about a year after their engagement and six months after he had returned to his work in London, a letter from the doctor roused every hope she had ever founded on the project into full activity.

In the winter, John Martyn, who had never been very strong, had had a bad attack of influenza, followed in early spring by a congestion of the lungs. He had struggled

all the summer against the weakness it had left behind, but now in the autumn his worst fears were confirmed, and all the symptoms of consumption were showing themselves.

"A long sea-voyage or a winter in the South is what they order me," he wrote, "but you know how impossible both are under the circumstances."

It was then that Guida resolved to act. A month later she had concluded the engagement with the Alvarengas, and was on her way to her own country, resolved to do what she could by asserting her rights to secure for her fiance a new chance of life. And so, thinking only of him, maddened by the sudden slipping away of the chance on which each hour's delay had made her count more securely of making a true friend of her cousin, she had grasped at her opportunity.

"I have done wrong," she said to herself, stopping in her rapid walk to stare out over the wild, inky ocean, across which the furious south wind was beating with growing violence; "I have done wrong, and

I am ready to take my punishment. But, oh, I want my reward too. I will work honestly now to earn it. Mollie herself could not do more."

CHAPTER X

THE MOTHER

MOLLIE threw open her shutters with a sigh of relief. Once again a glowing blue sky met her eyes, a deep sapphire-blue piled high against the horizon with rounded masses of snowy cloud, the remnants of those which for the last three days had been pouring unceasingly their contents on to the drenched earth. It had not been cold—warm rather, with a damp, clammy warmth more suited to a fern-house than to human beings; a misty warmth which clouded the mirrors, and made the flaps of her envelopes and her stamps all stick together with no extraneous aid. They had only been out once since the day of her arrival, on the Sunday to Mass. That had been in some ways a new experience for Mollie.

The car had put them down at a side entrance, a narrow door leading to a passage,

and a few stairs up which they had passed in front of the open doorway of a handsome sacristy. Another door opened on their left, and Mollie, following the others through the narrowest of arches, found herself, to her astonishment, emerging from behind the richly carved and gilded altar into the sanctuary. There were ladies and children kneeling all around on the very altar-steps, and groups of men standing on either side, while a crowd of men and women, mostly standing too, filled the body of the church behind the altar-rails. A moment later the priest emerged from behind the altar in his turn, and Mass began. For a few moments Mollie felt strange, almost shocked, but the feeling passed as quickly as it had come. There was an atmosphere of devotion in the place. It was not want of respect which dictated the crowding round, but rather the respectful familiarity of vassals and subjects who have for generations been at home in the palace of the King, and know their privileges and customs too well to need any severe laws of etiquette. And then one felt, knowing that uncounted prayers had

gone up with uncounted Masses to God's throne from the ancient church, that one's own weak efforts were borne along with the rest. Mollie prayed with a devotion which had often been lacking to her in a neat English church, and the familiar sacred words and actions, in which the friends of the old life and those of the new were at one, carried away the last feeling of strangeness in a strange land.

They were all indeed doing their best to make her feel at home, and Mollie had already grown to like her two cousins. The pair interested her greatly. They were so simple and unassuming, so flatteringly eager to have her opinion on all sorts of subjects, in which they evidently considered her an authority because she had been to Paris and to London. They were so deferent indeed to her judgments, pronounced with all the *aplomb* of one who knows Paris from the inside of the convent, and had spent three weeks in London in all, that she was tempted to take them for examples of southern ladies whose education is popularly supposed to be confined to their cate-

chism and the mysteries of the toilet-table, till she found that both, though speaking neither language quite correctly nor easily, had read a large number of French and English classics, besides those of their own country; that Soledade had a passion for serious literature which not all the efforts of her mistress at the convent had succeeded in inculcating into herself, and that Mafalda's embroidery was a perfect marvel of dainty and delicate workmanship.

"Soledade can do better still when she likes," explained Mafalda, "but she is always wrapped up in her books, and dreams of how she would like to settle things, if she could. You should hear her discuss all sorts of projects with Luiz. If those two had their will and money enough, Portugal would be a bit of Eden. As it is——"

"One can only talk and dream, and do nothing," interrupted Soledade quickly. But she did the thing which lay nearest to her hand, and the very next day after the party gave Gracinda her first reading-lesson, which had been a great success. The

girl had so much natural aptitude that it seemed likely she would need little teaching before knowing how to read.

"And I who spent days and days learning my letters," said, with a sigh, her colleague, the cook, a plump and dark-haired person who bore the classical name of Herminia.

"And who does not know them now," added Mafalda in French to Mollie, who had followed her to the kitchen to help in the making of a new kind of cake. A little cousin, who had visited them the day before, had not only given them the recipe, but a practical demonstration, while her mother made her visit upstairs, and it had succeeded so well that Mafalda was moved to emulation.

"It is like reading enigmas to decipher her accounts. I always make Soledade read them, even when it is my week for keeping house."

Mollie had sometimes wished she had a house to keep during those endless wet days, when the outside world was shut off by a moving gray veil with no break in it from

morning to night. But in spite of the wet there were passers-by, though infrequent ones, whom it amused her to watch. Now, it would be a pair of patient oxen, bending their long-horned heads under their carved and painted Moorish yokes, while their driver, walking barefoot beside the heavy wagon, which reminded her of an ancient British chariot in her history-book, with his shoulders wrapped in a rain-cloak of straw in superimposed layers like a thatch, urged them on with his goad. Now a woman, barefoot too, since it is waste of good shoes and stockings to wear them in the wet, would pass with a basket on her head—a basket of fish, perhaps, which she announced in loud and persuasive tones: "Oh, what rich sardines! Who buys sardines? Oh, what rich sardines!" Or a red bowl, all shining in the rain, full of black olives, which she proclaimed in long, drawn-out wailing tones, as *"Azeitonas, A —zeit—o-o-o—nas."*

"There are not many people along this road," said Mafalda. "That is why it is more fun living further into the town. One

can spend hours looking out of the window there."

"But one does not, surely?" said Mollie.

"Well, some people do," answered Mafalda. "They dress nicely and then sit there and watch the street and the people who pass. Of course, we would not, except at Carnival-time, or for a quarter of an hour or so, because we have always so much to do. But lots of people like it."

"There is an old lady up the Avenida, who never goes out except on Sunday, but she is installed at her window at eight o'clock in the morning. I have often seen her," said Soledade.

"Some people are there late at night, too," put in Mollie. "I remember when we went to the party I noticed several girls at windows here and there."

Soledade laughed, and Mafalda, for some inexplicable reason, colored hotly.

"Only when the weather is fine," said her sister. "In wet weather it is not worth while."

"No, of course not," said Mollie innocently, and wondered why Mafalda looked

so self-conscious. She had noticed that Mafalda was a little depressed these days, except indeed on Sunday, when she had come home from church in a state of cheerfulness which had lasted till evening.

But now luckily the rain had stopped at last, and Donna Carlotta announced at breakfast that she would profit by the sunshine to pay visits that afternoon to the rest of the family, and in particular to Luiz's mother, Donna Guiomar.

"We will keep her to the last," she said, "because she is very lonely, and we can give her all the rest of our time."

So they set off about three o'clock in the motor-car, and for the next hour Mollie climbed stairs and saw new faces and smiled amiably at ladies with whom she did not dare to air her newly acquired Portuguese.

She was growing a little tired of stiff, bare drawing-rooms, furnished in varying degrees of richness, but nearly all with the same disused air. In more than one the servant had preceded them in order to open the shutters and pull up the blinds, before admitting them into the chilly splendor kept

carefully hidden from the light of day. But to her relief Donna Guiomar's drawing-room was different.

The house itself was uninteresting enough from the outside, one in a long, irregular row in a long, dull street, with not even the usual balcony to break the flat monotony of its narrow front. But inside, once they had mounted several flights of narrow stairs, the scene changed. The room into which they were shown by the old man-servant, who looked with fatherly interest into Mollie's fresh, young face, and asked politely after her grandfather's health, ran the whole length of the house at the back, its three windows opening on to a wide balcony, full of plants and sunny still in spite of the half-drawn blinds.

The mistress of the house half sat, half lay in a wicker chair, between the table piled with papers and books, and the window, shaded by curtains of old-fashioned tapestry in soft colorings. Mollie, looking eagerly at her, could find nothing familiar in the pale, thin features, surrounded by masses of hair much too white

for the still youthful face. But Donna Guiomar had a better memory.

"I should have known you by your eyes, my dear," she said, drawing the girl down to kiss her, "such eyes are not easy to forget, even if Luiz had not been so careful to refresh my memory for me. But you are more like your father than ever now—poor Diogo!"

She sighed, and drew Mollie down to the seat beside her, still keeping her hand in hers. Her voice was very like her son's, Mollie thought, and her face, when she smiled, reminded her of him. But the smile faded and the plaintive, weary expression which seemed habitual to it, clouded it once more as she added: "Those were happy times. Dear Freamunde! How I should love to see it again."

"And so you will, my dear," said Donna Carlotta, heartily, "when you get a little stronger. What about this new treatment they tell me that you are thinking of trying?"

"Luiz wants me to," she answered. "He has great faith in it. I suppose I must at

least try it. The doctor sees no reason why I should not."

Mollie's eyes wandered, while they discussed doctors, to the window, and remained there, fixed in wonder at the unexpectedly magnificent view, the picturesque heap of red and white roofs, broken here and there by the high tower of a church or a cluster of green trees, bounded by the far-away purple line of the mountains beyond the Douro, and to the right a soft blue line against the fading gray of the horizon to mark the sea. Donna Guiomar turned from her conversation to follow Mollie's look.

"You can see still better from the veranda," she said. "Mafalda, dear, take her outside and show her all our beauties."

The view was more extensive from the big balcony, and its height above the surrounding houses gave one a feeling of freedom and fresh air. One felt the air must be fresh, blowing in from those misty, purple hills, or the boundless blue ocean beyond.

"It had needs be when one never gets any

other," said Mafalda. "It is ten years now since she left the house for a day, and for the last year or two she has not even been downstairs."

Mollie looked at her in startled sympathy.

"It is like being in prison," she said. "What illness is it that she has?"

Mafalda did not answer for a moment, then she shrugged her shoulders.

"I do not know. No one knows. Some people will tell you—no, mother scolded me for repeating that. It is certain that she is ill—but whether something organic or of the nerves, or, rather, of the mind, I can not tell you."

Mollie looked puzzled. "The mind?" she said; but Mafalda went on: "Ten years ago she came up from the country to consult a doctor about some trifling ailment. She had been delicate and sickly for years. His treatment did not satisfy her, and she went to Paris. She came back quite changed, and no better in health. Almost at once they shut their house in the country and came to live here. It was a great wrench for Luiz, who loves his old home and the life there,

and who has the greatest taste for all sorts of country pursuits. He had studied the whole agricultural question, spending a good deal of time abroad so as to get hold of the latest ideas, and was eager to get on with the experiments and changes he had planned for improving the land and the people. But, of course, every one thought it would only be for a year or two till his mother got better, and since they could not well afford to live in town while he did nothing—especially as the French doctor's treatment is a costly one—he got a place in a friend's office, just to go on with. That was ten years ago, and things have not changed yet, unless that Donna Guiomar has grown a little thinner and paler, poor thing—and that her son's best years are being spent in an occupation he hates, hide it as he may!"

Mafalda, who had spoken in a low, rapid voice, stopped short now, but after a few moments' silence, during which they had watched the western sky, all pink and mauve in the sunset, she went on:

"Of course, Luiz would not allow that

they are wasted. There are few sons so devoted to their mothers. You ask Soledade to tell you——" Then she stopped again, and turned to Mollie with a smile. "No, perhaps you had better not ask Soledade. After all, you do not want any one to help you to appreciate Luiz; now, do you?"

"No," said Mollie. "I have known him since I was a child, you know. How bright the sky is! It makes one look as red as if one were on fire, simply with the reflection. And look at those pigeons. What a lovely silvery white they are against the rosy pink over there."

"Yes," said Mafalda. "I am glad to say that we shall have no more rain, at least for the present."

Mollie found it difficult to be as cheerful as usual during the rest of the visit. She felt her heart beating with an almost intolerable pity for the pale, faded woman, whose handsome, cheerful room, with its books and flowers and antique furniture and rich porcelains and silver, was nothing more than a prison cell, and who, besides her own cross, had to be helping to make

the burden of another—a pity which showed itself so clearly in her candid eyes when she bent to kiss Donna Guiomar good-by, that the invalid looked up at her with a long, searching gaze.

"Come again soon," she said at last, releasing the girl's hand. "Soledade here finds time to make me a special little visit now and again. Next time you come bring Margarida with you, Soledade, my dear."

CHAPTER XI

FRIENDS

MOLLIE sat at her writing-table, the ingenious writing-table made out of the top drawer of her press, biting her pen meditatively.

Before her lay a virgin sheet of paper, and a task which she would have gladly put off longer still, had not the inexorable laws regulating the mails made it her last opportunity for Funchal. If only there had been time to get the answer from her grandfather, to whom she had explained the whole matter, asking him what she ought to do—but that could not come before the evening or the next morning, and the post went out at five.

At last, as an encouragement to further efforts, Mollie dipped her pen in the ink and wrote: "My dear Guida."

"That seems rather a commonplace way to address her," she thought, contemplating

the three words with her head on one side, "but I can not put 'you wretch' or 'false traitress' or anything else which would be more appropriate to the situation, as things are."

She was interrupted in her meditations by a knock at the door.

"Entré," she cried, and Alegria put in her curly dark head.

"Are you nearly ready, *Prima* Mollie?" she asked anxiously. "Nuno has nearly finished giving his Portuguese lesson."

"Giving?" asked Mollie, with a smile.

"Oh, having," corrected Alegria, to whom this particular correction was no novelty. "And I am going to dress now. Will you be ready soon?"

"As soon as you are," answered Mollie, and thus admonished set to work with renewed energy at the letter, all the more willingly that a brilliant idea had just occurred to her.

"I received your note," she wrote rapidly, "and since, as you say, I can not even guess at your motives, I do not wish to judge you. But our grandmother must not be deceived.

Will you tell her yourself, when you think fit? I leave it to you."

She stopped, to smile to herself at the clever way in which she was putting all the tiresome task of explaining off her own shoulders on to Guida's. "I trust you to tell her," she went on. "It will not be so hard for you."

"And if it is, it is her own fault," she added to herself. Then she went on impulsively, scribbling as fast as she could.

"Guida, dear, you might have trusted me. I would have done what I could for you if I had known. But now I leave it to you."

She stopped again. "Is that cowardly or lazy of me, I wonder?" she asked herself. "She begged me to give her a chance. That is a chance; surely it is not part of my duty to denounce her."

She turned back to her letter with a sigh, and then reflected, more cheerfully. "Why, Guida has surely confessed long ago, or it has all come out. Anyway, I can not do anything more."

She wrote her name, her full Portuguese name, across the bottom of the sheet, folded

it up hastily so as to put an end to any further reflections, closed and stamped the envelope, and then shut up her writing-table with great decision.

Ten minutes later the letter was on its way to the post, and Mollie herself walking with a clear conscience and great satisfaction between her two small cousins along the sunny avenue toward the city. There was a birthday party in the family of a cousin, the Castro Azevedos, the children who were Miss Hamer's pupils. Donna Carlotta was not able to go herself, and Mollie had begged to be allowed to take them. After some little demur, their mother had consented.

"It is not very far," she said, "and it is really in the country here. I do not know if your grandmother would approve, but a good many girls do go about now in twos and threes, though it is not a general custom yet."

They found quite a large party of children with mothers and governesses, among whom was Sybil Meredith. It was the first time that Mollie had met her traveling com-

panions since they had landed ten days before, and it was very pleasant to be able to chatter English again in full liberty, though indeed Mollie was making great progress in her father's native tongue.

"And they nearly all seem able to speak French or English," she said to Lucy, "even if it is a little queer at times. Only my cousin Luiz speaks really good English."

"Yes, he was at school at Stonyhurst for some years, I believe, and has many English friends. He is very clever, they say. Have you seen his mother?"

"Yes," said Mollie, "more than once, poor thing. I felt so sorry for her."

"So do we all," said Lucy Hamer, "though few people know her well now. It is such a mysterious illness, too—no one can understand anything about it."

"What, not even the doctor?" asked Mollie.

"Oh, the doctor! I mean the gossips, those who like to know all about their neighbors' business. I can tell you, there are the most marvelous stories——"

"There always are," said Sybil, "once

there is anything the least little bit out of the ordinary. For gossip, we are no better here than anywhere else. In any case, if her illness is mysterious, to me the greatest mystery about Donna Guiomar is her patience and the amount of good she manages to do in spite of her seclusion. Ask Soledade to give you a few details."

"Oh, she has," said Mollie. "Soledade is very fond of Donna Guiomar."

"And now, tell us what you think of Oporto?" asked Lucy. "I suppose you have not seen very much of it, living as you do out there at Boa Vista?"

"Oh, yes, I have," answered Mollie. "The girls were determined that I should see things. They have planned several longer excursions as soon as the roads are a bit drier. But we have been to the Bolsa, and the cathedral and lots of other churches, and to see the bishop, and across the bridge to Villa Nova, and, of course, in the town itself, the Rua das Flores——"

"So called because there are forty jewelers' shops in a row," said Lucy. "But I suppose when Don Manuel built it, four

hundred years ago, there really were some flowers to be seen."

"It seems to me that there are flowers everywhere," said Mollie. "It is so strange to see so much green in November, and those big plants of cosmos, and Japanese anemones and chrysanthemums and geraniums and camellias, all smothered in buds. . . ."

"Wait till January, and they are in flower," said Sybil, "and the mimosas and violets everywhere, great big purple violets, which you can pick and pick and make hardly any impression on the beds of them, and jonquils. There is no real winter here, you know, though it is often cold enough."

"I should think so," rejoined Lucy, "and one shivers in the fireless rooms. Have you noticed that there are few fireplaces in the houses?"

"Yes, but while the sun is as hot as this," said Mollie, "one can hardly need them."

They were walking in the garden, a wide garden which spread itself in three terraces, one above the other, the lowest edged by a wall overhanging the great gray cliff which

bordered the river. The steps which led down from one terrace to the other were decorated by great palms in pots and overhung with pink ivy geranium and heliotrope, the heavy perfume of which mingled with that of the sun-warmed brown mold. Mollie looked out over the river and the pale gold streak which marked the bar to the ocean beyond, and sighed contentedly. The *Mariana* had reached Funchal safely—that she knew from the shipping news of the day before—but after an eight days' journey and continual bad weather. She could not feel sorry that she herself had been safe among friends rather than tossing about on the furious Atlantic. Not for a good deal would she have given up these last ten days and their experiences—the days she had so dreaded, she remembered, looking at the two traveling companions, on whose lips she had hung when they spoke of the unknown into which she was going.

Her reflections were interrupted by the others. They had left her and gone a little way along the path to meet a newcomer, whom they now brought with them—a tall,

high-colored, yellow-haired girl, no longer in her first youth, whom Mollie at once decided was not her sort.

"Oh, I know who it is quite well," she said. "I saw you the other day with the Alvarenga children on the Boa Vista road. You must not think that because we live so far out we never know what is going on. And what do you think of the place now you are here, I wonder, and the natives? Queer people, aren't they?"

Mollie flushed. "Possibly they are," she said with a smile, though there was an angry light in her blue eyes, "but you must not expect me to give an unprejudiced opinion. I am one of the natives myself, you know."

"What? Oh, really! I beg your pardon, Miss Moore."

"But, I say, you know," she added, "you must not mind. I often tell them to their faces my opinion of them and their queer ways."

"To Miss Smith, all ways which are not English are queer," explained Sybil. "Have you been having any more tea-parties, Dora?"

"No, worse luck. The last was such a fiasco. I had it all ready, proper plum cake, you know, and thin bread and butter, and milk which had not been boiled—they were all sure I should get consumption or something, because they are so careful to boil every drop of milk, you know—well; it was all ready, but then it poured and poured. I knew you two could not come, and so did not expect you; but I did expect the others who had promised. Only Fräulein turned up, and seemed to think that she was doing me a great favor. I assure you I could have wept into the tea-pot. As it was, the children ate up the bread and butter and drank the tea, the cat had the milk, and I have been getting through the plum cake alone. They do not care for that sort of *'brôa,'* as the cook calls it."

She ended with a sigh. The other two laughed, but Mollie felt a stirring of sympathy with the exile and her unsuccessful tea-party. After all, what were golden sunshine and air like wine to one whose heart was in a grimy little villa in some smoky little suburb of London—Miss

Smith's accent proclaimed her native haunts —in a cosy, if shabby room, where one shut out the fog in the long November evenings, and sat round the fire with one's tea-cup and one's cronies, and gossiped and read the papers or the newest penny magazine, and discussed sales and insertions and new blouses, and was at home!

CHAPTER XII

TWO LETTERS

THE *Mariana* had made a very bad passage, one of the worst in the Captain's recollection, as he assured Donna Maria Margarida during the last dinner of the trip. The Captain and Guida had become very friendly during the trying days just finished, since she, of all the lady-passengers, was the only one who had courage to show up habitually for meals, or on deck.

"But she had plenty of courage, that young lady," the Captain had remarked to the doctor, "and indeed, she needs it, with the old lady in the state she is in."

"And the old lady may thank her stars that she has it," rejoined the doctor. "If it had not been for her granddaughter's continual care and energy, I am afraid that this journey would have finished her. It was madness to undertake it in her state of health."

"Oh, you know that we often have the sea like a duck-pond at this time of year," said the Captain, "and I believe the doctors were afraid of her wintering in Portugal. It is pretty damp and cold there at times, and she had avoided it for years."

"And with good reason, apparently. Well, I suppose it was a choice of two evils. In any case she owes her granddaughter a debt of gratitude, and the young lady's task is not done yet. It will be a case of touch and go the whole winter through. And even then——"

The doctor did not end his sentence in words, but the shake of his head with which he cut it short was more eloquent than they could have been. And, indeed, when at last the *Mariana* dropped anchor outside Funchal and they carried Donna Guilhermina up on deck, one did not need to be a doctor to see how terribly ill she looked. There were few traces of the cold and stately dame whom Lucy Hamer had described to Mollie, in the feeble, fragile old lady who clung so eagerly to her granddaughter's hand, and whose eyes followed

her every movement with a wistful affection which would have surprised even those who had known her all her life—first as wife and as mother, and then as a widow left without a child.

"If only I could have had you sooner, Margarida," she said, with a sigh. It was the evening of the day on which they had landed. The journey from the ship to the villa on the slope above and beyond the town had been performed slowly and with infinite care, the old lady being borne in a sort of litter on the shoulders of two of her own gardeners, while Guida, who had refused a similar conveyance for herself up the steep hillside where no ordinary carriage can go, walked beside her grandmother. Now, lying at last in the big, airy room from whose windows the eye could range far out over the hillside and sea beyond, she turned her tired old head slowly on the richly embroidered pillow to follow Guida's every movement as she skilfully prepared her potion, her gaze resting complacently on the slight young figure and

graceful head, with its crown of raven black hair.

"I have wanted you so," she went on. "I have been very lonely nearly all my life. But I had promised your mother that you should be educated in her own old schools, and indeed your grandfather had his word to say, too. But it is my turn now, and I must make the most of the time I have got. It may be short enough."

But Guida, holding the medicine to her lips, would hear no melancholy forebodings.

"Wait till you have had a good night's rest on dry land, grandmother," she said, cheerfully, "and then we shall see how much better you feel. Is it not delightful to have a firm floor under one's feet? Not but what even this floor seems a little unsteady—the effect of my long trip."

"And your weariness, child. You have hardly rested since you came on board at Leixœs. To-night you must sleep well. My old Cacilda will be able to do anything that may be necessary, and there are servants enough within call. You must rest un-

disturbed. Go to your room, Margarida. Good-night, child, and God bless you."

Guida bent down and kissed the thin white hand and then the pale cheek. The old lady drew her down and returned her kiss, then with an effort raising her hand traced a cross on her forehead.

"God bless you," she whispered; "the last time I blessed a child of mine—it was the night before he died—your father, child. You used to have his eyes. God send you have his heart, too."

Her voice died away in a whisper. Guida stood upright, her face working. For a moment her confession burned on her lips. But she forced it back. Now was not the time. She bent down again and kissed the weak hand, and then stole softly from the room.

* * * * *

A week later the out-going mail carried two letters which had cost Guida more hours of anxious thought than Mollie's had taken minutes. The first was in answer to that young lady's own, and ran as follows:

"My Dear Mollie:

"Thanks for your generosity. You might denounce me—but you leave me the task of denouncing myself. No, I do not mean to be satirical, and I thank you, Mollie. I asked for a chance, and you have given it to me. Moreover, I hope, I believe, that I have not done what I did in vain. I ought to explain more clearly. I wish that you knew what love is, Mollie, then a word would serve to explain, almost to justify me——"

Mollie stopped, coloring with vexation, when she reached this passage, and laid the letter down.

"Just like Mafalda," she said, half aloud. She had only that morning been engaged in a warm discussion with Mafalda on that very subject. That young lady, driven into a corner by the very trenchant arguments with which Mollie, full of the wise teaching of her convent years, had scouted all notions of true love which was not founded upon the most serious considerations, had at last extricated herself by her equally trenchant statement that Mollie herself, never having been in love, had no more authority upon the subject than the blind man upon color.

"They are all alike," thought Mollie, re-

membering her discomfiture. She let Guida's letter slip to the floor as she sat, her chin in her hands, staring out of the window while she thought the matter over.

"I have never been in love, certainly," she reflected, "but I do not see how that can matter so much. I have a heart like any one else. I know how to be fond of people. There's grandfather. Of course he hardly counts, nor grandmamma. But there are others—the girls at school, the nuns, the girls here—Guida, too, in spite of her trick, and Donna Carlotta and Luiz's mother——"

Her face had been clouding even as she went through the list. It was all liking, not love; all new friendship, not old affection. But after the last name it brightened again. "And Luiz," she said, and stopped. Here at least there was no doubt. This was old friendship and new at the same time—the child's affection awakened from its long sleep to flourish with redoubled strength, like a lilac artificially kept back and then exposed to gentle heat, which forces it in a few days into bud and blossom.

"So they need not be so sure that I know nothing about it," she said, looking dreamily out into the blue distance, and then all at once a warm blush dyed her cheeks, and she hastily turned back to the letter.

"A word would serve to explain, almost to justify me. But I can not write it all—give me a little time. I will make my confession to our grandmother first. For the moment she is too much upset by the journey to bear any shock, however slight, and this I know now would be no slight shock. But when I have told her, you shall know all. Till then do not think too badly of me, and once more I thank you.

"GUIDA."

The other letter, delivered at the door of a dingy lodging in Bloomsbury, was longer, but hardly more explicit.

"QUINTA DAS HERAS, Funchal, Madeira.

"MY DEAREST:

"You will wonder at my address, perhaps at my long silence, which it will now explain. You will want some explanation of my change of plan. You will have a dozen questions ready, but I will answer none of them till I have told you the *kern* of the matter, as our good old friend, Dr. Sartorius, used to say in his German-English. It is he himself who helps to make the *kern* in this case. Just fancy, I had not been here two days, when my grandmother's sudden need of a doctor sent messengers in every direction. You must

know that I am here with my grandmother, Donna Guilhermina. How we met is part of the explanation I have to give you one day, but in the meanwhile do not forget to address me by the stately name, which is my own, and which I wrote for you on the day we were engaged in your favorite book of Novalis' poems. Well, the usual doctor was away and the messenger came back with one of those from the new German Sanitorium of Santa Anna, not half a mile away. And who should come back with the messenger but Dr. Sartorius himself! You remember that tuberculosis was always one of his pet studies. Of course, once he had prescribed for grandmamma there was a great scene of recognition and renewal of friendship. We spoke of you, and—oh, John, I can hardly believe it is true!—he is looking for an assistant for the winter months. 'Tell him that the next boat from Plymouth leaves two days after the mail arrives. There will be just time for him to pack his books, and buy a straw hat.' Those were his last words as he left me to write to you. Of course you will come, John. It is a chance which seems almost too good to be true. You will come from the fogs to the sunshine, which seems more golden than ever now that I know it will not be wasted without doing you any good. I will not write any more. The returning mail is the one which will bring you. The boat arrives here on the 23rd. Could we ever have dreamt of such a Christmas?

"Yours now and always,

"MARGARIDA."

CHAPTER XIII

OUR LADY OF SOLITUDE

AS THE car turned the corner beyond a group of trees and then went spinning down the steep incline toward the valley, Mollie threw back her head and drew a long breath of supreme satisfaction.

"Cold?" asked Luiz Noronha, skilfully negotiating the narrow passage between a deep rut and the rocky boulders which lined the hill road.

"Cold? No, it is heavenly," said Mollie. "I could go on like this for ever. I had no idea the country was so lovely this side of Oporto, nor that the roads were so good."

"Oh, they might be better," rejoined he, slowing down to let a couple of fawn-colored oxen with yard-long horns, driven by a diminutive, barefooted girl, pass the car. "It is the heavy ox-carts which do the damage. This bit is always being mended,

but you see it is the place where cross-roads meet, the highway to Oporto, and that between Penafiel and Vizella. There are a good many *quintas* along here. In a minute or two you will get a view both of Thelude and Freamunde."

He put the car back at the fourth speed as they emerged from between a double border of straggling pines into the plain, and the long ribbon of road spread out before them, all white and smooth between its edgings of rough, gorse-sprinkled moor. Beyond the moor stretched the patchwork of cultivated land on the one hand; on the other a line of blue hills rose in the distance against the deep turquoise of the sky. The air was keen, and sweet with nutty perfume of the gorse-blossom. There was a soft bloom in the distances, but near at hand the shadows of the leafless trees lay sharp and black across the road, whose granite dust sparkled and glittered as they sped along.

"There is Freamunde," said Luiz, while at the same moment Mafalda, sitting behind, tapped on the glass to call her attention.

Following the gesture of both, Mollie looked eagerly at the long white building which a turn of the road had just brought to view, where it lay on the spur of a hill, which here advanced, like a rock into a sea of green and brown, into the wide valley through which they were passing.

"Oh, I remember it!" she cried. "That is the chapel at the side, and the tower where my father had his study, and that balcony, high up and almost covered in with a trellis, that belongs to my old nursery. Oh, I can recognize it all! But the courtyard? That must be on the other side."

"Yes, the road winds round through the woods. From here you see the field path you used to take to come to Thelude. We shall be at Thelude in a moment now. Look, there is the garden wall."

Mollie looked up as they passed along under a high moss-grown wall, over whose upper edge hung a ragged drapery of green.

"That is surely the wall where the lizards used to run," she said, as they turned, and,

passing between two massive stone pillars supporting a weather-eaten gateway of iron, entered the courtyard of Thelude.

"Welcome to my house, little cousin," said Luiz, helping her down from her seat, and then turning to assist his cousins out of the covered part of the car.

Mollie stood for a moment, looking up at the long, low stone front of the house. It was only one story above the ground floor, which seemed chiefly taken up with cellars and warehouses of various sorts, as is often the case in Portuguese houses. The hall door, heavily studded with iron nails, stood at the top of a double flight of stone steps, whose balustrade was all draped with pink ivy geranium. Under the middle of the steps opened an archway leading right through the house into a smaller courtyard, in the midst of which a fountain in a granite basin, set round with beds of violets, sparkled gloriously in the midday sunshine. Just beyond the fountain stood a young mimosa-tree in full bloom, looking as if it had caught a handful of sun-rays among its delicate yellow clusters.

"Like the garden in 'Alice in Wonderland,'" thought Mollie, "the garden she was always seeing through the little golden door and had so much trouble in reaching. Once I needed no key to come here, in and out at my will. Now——"

"So sad, Mollie!" said Mafalda, shaking out her skirts.

"Not cold, I hope?" said Donna Carlotta, anxiously. Like many of her compatriots, fear of catching cold was one of the anxieties of Donna Carlotta's useful and blameless existence. "Soledade would have been quite pleased to change places with you for a bit if you had mentioned it."

"Oh, no, it was splendid!" protested Mollie, while Luiz, who had stolen a glance unperceived at her wistful face, interrupted in a laughing tone:

"Only hungry, I hope; as indeed you all should be, if you are to do justice to Herculina's cooking. This way, please. Lunch will be ready in less than ten minutes."

Mollie liked the dining-room of Thelude, but not because of any beauty it might have possessed. It was a long, low room, pa-

pered with a frankly hideous paper, representing an endless succession of castles and bridges in particularly depressing shades of brown and gray. The furniture was shabby and only old enough to be ugly without being interesting. The painted ceiling, on which chubby cherubs hovered around baskets of fruit, was sadly in want of a restoring brush, and the carpet was almost threadbare. But, in spite of all that, Mollie found in the room something of that charm of homelikeness which she so often missed in the more stately houses she had seen of late, with their immaculate order and their air of being rather for show than for habitation. There was something about the place, for all its unfamiliar features—the wood-fire burning on the wide hearth, the little old servant in her ample skirts and bright kerchief proffering strange dishes—which brought to her mind the dear old room at Rathmor, where her grandfather was no doubt at that very moment smoking a Sunday-morning pipe, while waiting in the company of the parish priest and a few more of his cronies for his Sunday dinner.

Perhaps it was the influence of the country she had in her mind which prompted her next reflection; namely that, after all, the chief charm of the room was the view to be had from out of its windows. There were three of these, all looking south, and all open to the midday sun and the balmy midday air. A white rose swung on the end of a long stem across the one nearest Mollie, and the eye could range right across the valley to the blue line of hills beyond. There were roses on the table, too; creamy tea-roses tipped with crimson and mingled with a handful of heliotrope in an old blue bowl of genuine porcelain.

Later, after they had explored the house, the girls went out into the garden while the two men went to look over some new buildings and Donna Carlotta discussed the poultry-yard with Herculina, the little old servant who had charge of the place during the long years of the master's absence. They wanted to see what flowers they could gather to take back to Donna Guiomar.

"How she must long sometimes to get back here to the country again," said Mol-

lie, looking round her at the wide expanse all bathed in the golden afternoon light. "Ten years—it is a lifetime!"

"Yes," rejoined Mafalda. "But ten years always in the country would be worse still to my mind—though, for that matter, she does not much enjoy the advantages of the town, to be sure. Soledade, there are far prettier roses on the other side of the house, you know."

They were in the long walk which ran along the wall of the garden, overlooking the highway. On the inner side the wall was only breast-high, while the summer-house made a convenient post of observation for contemplating the landscape. Mafalda put down the flowers they had already gathered on the rustic table in the middle of the summer-house, as she made the above remark to her sister.

"Why, I should think that this side would be much the best," said Mollie. "It is the south, and more sheltered."

"Oh, well, there is heliotrope, and there may be a few jonquils, though it is early yet

for them," rejoined the other, though she made no effort to move.

Soledade smiled. "And perhaps a few violets near the fountain," said she. "Come along, Mollie, let us see."

"But Mafalda?" said Mollie, as the other girl drew her away.

"Oh, she will be all right. Donna Guiomar loves violets, especially those little wild ones which smell so much sweeter than the big ones."

"There goes another motor-car," said Mollie, as they passed round the side of the house into the inner courtyard. "Why, it seems to be stopping here. Who can it be?"

"Lots of cars pass along this road, especially on Sundays," said Soledade. She was smiling a little, for no particular reason that Mollie could see, her usually pale face slightly flushed. But that might have been only the exertion of stooping over the violets. They gathered all they could find—it was early yet for there to be many—and added to them a good handful of heliotrope and jonquils and long-stemmed pieces of pink geranium from off the steps before

turning back toward the garden. There was a big stone bench set in the shelter of a sort of arbor of camellia bushes, just under the dining-room windows, and toward this Soledade led the way.

"Let us sit down a minute," said she. On some days her limp was barely perceptible, but to-day Mollie noticed that she walked wearily and looked unusually pale and sad. She would like to ask her what was the matter, but in spite of all their amiability and genuine kindness she did not feel as yet enough at home with the two to venture on confidences. So she sat on in silence, basking in the genial heat, breathing in the mild air, balmy now with the scent of the flowers in her hands, and dreamily looking out over the landscape all bathed in golden light, though the shadows were growing longer as the afternoon wore on. Far away, beyond the brown fields and the green ones, white against its background of deep green with the glowing sapphire above, rose the ancient walls of Freamunde, the home of her family for a dozen generations. She looked at it with a feeling of loving pride.

Not so long ago it all had been so remote and far off, a mere memory of the past. Now it seemed the only part of her life that was real. The school-years, even the pleasant months at Rathmor, were the dream now. She thought of the wet November morning, when her grandmother's letter came and her heart had failed her at the thought of going among strangers. Strangers—they were her own people! The Alvarengas, of course, were not near relatives, but Donna Guiomar and Luiz—and then Guida——. She had felt angry enough with Guida at the time. Now she could thank her. Why, but for Guida's trick, she would not now be sitting here enjoying the sunshine in the garden of Thelude, in Luiz's old home, the place where they had been such good friends long ago. She would have missed some of the best days of her life. Mollie smiled to herself at the thought. Yes, they were good days, golden days, full of sunshine and the warmth of friendship, of new interests and new affections. Her grandfather had been a true prophet. She was fast falling in love with this "land of gold

and burning blue," which, after all, was her own.

"A penny for your thoughts," said Soledade, suddenly, and then laughed a little bitterly. "Oh, no, I will not waste the penny. I can guess them all; more than you guess yourself."

"Why, what do you mean?" asked Mollie, startled and flushing crimson. "You are sometimes so mysterious, Soledade."

"And you are so very transparent, *priminha,* and unconscious, yes, unconscious. But never mind. I hate explanations, and I am queer, I know—they all tell me that. Come, let us take these to join to the others. We shall be starting soon, as Luiz wants to take us round by Freamunde."

"You are sure you do not mind not going outside, Soledade?" asked Mollie, anxiously.

Soledade looked straight into the pretty young face turned to hers, her brown eyes meeting the blue, black-fringed ones with a strange expression in their depths.

"No," she said deliberately, "I will not mind."

"There is another motor," remarked Mollie, as they turned into the long walk under the over-arching vine-boughs. "How quietly it must have come up for us only to hear it now."

She looked over the wall as she spoke.

"Oh, I know the car," she said, "and the driver. I see it almost every morning passing two or three times up and down our road. I suppose the owner lives near us. He drives it himself. Do you know him?"

"Very possibly I do," said Soledade; "but I did not see him just now."

"It was too bad of us to leave you lonely so long, Mafalda," said Mollie, joining her flowers to the heap which still lay on the table as they had left them. But the girl only smiled vaguely.

"Oh, it did not matter. Soledade, have you a piece of string? I could not make the bouquet."

Soledade was already putting the flowers together.

"There are various kinds of loneliness," she remarked, after a silence, as if thinking aloud.

"But only one *Soledade,*" said her sister, giving her an affectionate caress.

"Is that what Soledade means?" asked Mollie. "I always intended to ask."

"Yes, *Maria da Soledade,* Our Lady of Solitude. *Mater Desolata,* you know; not even of Sorrows, but of Loneliness. It is the title under which she is honored on the evening of Good Friday, in the big procession which commemorates the burial of Our Lord. The soldiers all walk bareheaded with muffled drums, and colors draped in crepe, and they carry the figure of Our Lord on a bier. Well, they carry a statue of Our Lady too—Our Lady most Desolate, Our Lady of Loneliness."

"What a sad name," said Mollie.

"Yes, the name is sad enough," rejoined its bearer, "but the thing itself is sadder still."

"Oh, I hope you will never know it by experience," said Mollie warmly.

"Amen," cried Mafalda.

Soledade went on putting the half-blown cream rosebuds and purple violets together in silence.

CHAPTER XIV

CHRISTMAS SHOPPING

"IT IS a month to-day since we reached Oporto," said Mollie.

"So it is," rejoined Lucy Hamer. "It seems much longer, does it not, Sybil?"

The three traveling companions, having met by appointment on the plea of helping Mollie to finish her Christmas shopping, had begun the arduous task by settling themselves in a sunny window of the tea-shop at the top of one of Oporto's most hilly streets, and refreshing themselves with tea and cakes.

"If things go on as they have begun," said Mollie, "I shall soon feel as if I had never been away."

"That's because you really belong here," answered Lucy. "It always takes me about three months to get accustomed to the place again after a holiday. Everything seems so

big and bare and empty; not only the house, but the days, even."

"That is what I like," said Sybil, thoughtfully. "I suppose it is because it is so long since I have been in England except for holidays, but there I am always unsettled, always on the rush, gathering impressions, new facts——"

"And new clothes," interrupted Lucy. "That is one of my chief holiday occupations in the intervals of devouring all the new books I have been dying to read since the last time, and have not been able to borrow."

"Yes, books and magazines and the theaters—all that helps one to feel rushed. One wants the long, quiet hours to think them all over, and let them sink in, before one can enjoy them properly."

"That is all right for serious people like you," said Lucy, helping herself to another cake. "I try to get more. I never knew how awfully interesting the dullest book could be till it was the only thing I had to read on a *quinta* in the Douro. The fatter the book and the more numerous the de-

tails, the more profoundly grateful I feel toward the author. And even when I have plenty to read, I do enjoy a nice homely English novel, where the family sits cosily round the fire having tea and toast, or plays tennis in the rectory garden, or walks home across fields in the twilight, lingering at every stile. Anything exotic and venturous leaves me cold. To begin with, I can not help wildly envying the bold hero who treads the deck of the gallant ship without the least qualm of seasickness, and then who can get up a proper interest in the swarthy, truculent villain with his flashing dark eyes and the knife in his sash, when one can meet a dozen of him any day one likes to look into the street?"

"Oh, come," protested Sybil. "'Villain' is a strong word to apply to poor, honest, hard-working *Zé Povinho,* whatever his looks may be."

"Yes, I know," said Lucy, "and even his looks are not always so fierce as I seem to insinuate. No villain ever wore the mutton-chop whiskers which he affects, at least in the country. But I am right about the

street. Why, one can see something interesting every time one looks out of the window. Only this morning I saw a scene which amused me. One of those Gallego boys who sell lace, you know those who shriek so loudly *Rendas* up and down the streets, stopped just underneath and unslung the pack from off his back and took out a piece of striped cotton to wipe his hot face. To him came another Gallego boy, barefoot this one, but selling, by some irony of fate, cards of those iron bits with which you strengthen the soles of your boots or wooden shoes. The first boy stopped the second, and began to bargain. At this moment another seller came along, a woman with a basket of dried grapes on her head. *'Quem quer uvas?'* she yelled. 'Who wants grapes with the sun in them?' Another woman, who was passing with a basket on her head containing a fat fowl, alive, and a bundle of cabbages, evidently wanted some, so the pair of them squatted side by side on the curb-stone to look them over. In the meanwhile the two boys came up to see what was going on; a lad who was passing with

a big framed holy picture came up, too, and a girl who was carrying some huge bundles of wood. The seller of raisins called a partner with the scales over from the other side of the street, and there was a discussion which lasted at least three minutes. Then the word *Americanos* floated up to me, and the woman with the fowl got up and went on her way. You know many people do not like the taste of the American grapes, which they introduced to fight the disease of the vine, and I conclude she was one of them. The others went on their way, too, not at all upset at having wasted their time; only the Gallego boy bought his card of bits of metal and continued down the street, shouting *Rendas* as loudly as ever. No, I must say that there is nothing villainous about the people. But for all that, I wish that I could have spent Christmas at home."

The word recalled them to the serious business of the afternoon, and they made haste to finish their tea and go out.

Lucy went to the door while Sybil helped Mollie to gather up her change.

"Não podo ser, santinha," they heard

say as they came up. A very old woman, dressed in a tattered skirt and shawl, stood holding out her hand.

"An alms," she begged, *"minhas riccas senhoras,* a little alms for the souls of those whom God has taken."

Mollie put a penny into the shaking old palm.

"Let it be for the love of God. May He give you health and happiness.

"What was that you said?" asked Mollie of Lucy.

Lucy laughed. "It sounds poetical," she said. " 'It can not be, oh, little saint!' 'The Lord favor you,' is often added. And the chances are you get the blessing just as well as if you give the alms. I expect you find the beggars rather a bother?"

"Well, no," acknowledged Mollie. "There are beggars in Ireland, too, you know, and they have a point in common with these. They beg, certainly, but rather as if they had a sort of right to your charity. It seems so natural that, you having and they not, you should share. There is a brotherly feeling about it that I like."

"Yes," said Sybil, "I have felt that. Of course, I suppose that proud independence would be more admirable; but, after all, their point of view is the Christian one. And there is something very friendly in the sort of understanding that they are giving you an excellent opportunity of doing a good work. It is not the pride of the Spanish beggar—it is more like the Irish, I suppose—there need be no false shame when we are all of the same household."

"And the children," said Mollie, "the little dark-eyed rogues, the confident way that they ask you for a flower out of your bouquet or for a half-penny for chestnuts. No wonder they want chestnuts! The very smell seems to belong to these clear, cold afternoons. It must be an almost pleasant life, that of the chestnut women, sitting all day in their corners, beside their pots of charcoal, sprinkled with salt, fanning the embers with those queer fans of white and pink quills, and turning the powdery, black-coated chestnuts in the earthenware jar full of holes, till they are soft and sweet and piping hot."

"And you simply long to buy a handful," added Lucy.

"Oh, but we do, whenever I am out with Nuno and Alegria. The first time I was rather startled, not at their proposing it, but at Alegria's producing a tiny embroidered handkerchief to carry them in. She seemed to think it quite natural, and as she thought it proper to retire into the by-lanes to eat them, at least I did not protest."

They had reached Praça Nova now, the heart of the town, a square paved in wavy patterns of black and white mosaic and decorated with an equestrian statue of Dom Pedro IV., the founder of the constitutional form of monarchy in Portugal, and hero of the siege of Oporto. It was more thronged than usual this clear, wintry afternoon, for besides the ordinary groups of loungers and business men, discussing politics and financial matters, the whole square and the streets leading to it were encumbered with country-people, who had come in for their Christmas shopping. Some had already made their purchases, which they carried on their heads in baskets or in patch-

work bags. Many were laden with the long loaves, which only appear at Christmas time for the manufacture of *rabanadas*—a dish said to be of Moorish origin, and consisting of slices of bread dipped in new milk and fried in a mixture of sugar or honey and oil. This, with *becalhau* (dried cod-fish) and sweet rice, forms the principal dish of the *consoada,* the Christmas-Eve dinner, which is practically the only meal of that day and the great family gathering of the festive season. Those who were not busy stood about in groups, the women in bright-colored kerchiefs and shawls, and the glory of gold chains and earrings; the men, mostly burned deep-brown by many years of work under the burning sun, resplendent in white shirts and gaudy ties, carrying long sticks or the inevitable umbrella, and all wearing more or less a sheepish expression as they paid court to the girls, who seemed much less embarrassed than their swains.

"It seems a very queer way to be making love," remarked Mollie, as they threaded their way across the road, past the big church of St. Anthony, where an embroid-

ered scarlet curtain before the great door proclaimed that there was Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament within, and up the step Rua de St. Antonio, crowned, like the street they had just come down, by another church.

"They used to do it in verse," said Sybil, "as some still do, the girl making up the answers to the man's *quatrains,* while the by-standers listen and applaud."

"But that is more public still."

"Hardly more so than the way their betters make love at the window," said Lucy; "the girl, perhaps, on the second or even the third or fourth floor; the young man gazing up at her from the street, his remarks and hers clearly audible to all passers-by."

"Oh!" cried Mollie. "Is it for making love that the poor things are at the windows in the evenings? But how can they expect people not to know?"

"They do not expect it," said Sybil. "Every one knows, but it is a custom of the country, and every one pretends not to. After a while the young man either sol-

emnly asks for the girl's hand from her parents, or else leaves off coming, and the affair is concluded; unless, indeed, she likes to put an end to it sooner by sending him away or failing to appear herself."

"It seems awfully queer," said Mollie. "Why can not they get introduced and talk to the girl properly?"

"Why, of course, they are introduced; often they are old friends, sometimes even relatives, and may meet often in society. But there they have small opportunity for any other intercourse than that of looks, which are only the first stage of the affair, though an important one. At the window they can exchange ideas and sentiments in peace, if not in comfort."

They turned into a big store as she spoke, and Lucy, who was in front, interrupted Sybil's explanations to point out its peculiar features to Mollie.

"I suppose it is rather unique in its way," she said, "because it was once a theater, the Theater Baquet, which was burned down about twenty years ago. Many people perished—how many will never be known.

They are all buried together in the Agramonte Cemetery, under a ghastly tombstone made of imitation débris, broken columns, twisted music-stands and the rest. I often think of the poor souls when I come in here."

They got through their shopping in time. Mollie found it difficult not to feel inordinately extravagant at the thought of spending thousands on the least thing, even though the thousands represented reis, and a rei was something less than the twentieth part of a penny. There was also not much of a show of the usual costly or cheap and showy futilities which do duty, as a rule, for Christmas presents. However, there was no want of pretty things in the proper quarters, exquisitely made gold filigree ornaments, beaten silver, delicate lace and embroidery, miracles of drawn-thread work and the rest, and she felt pleased enough with her afternoon's work as she took her place in the electric car and was whirled home through the growing dusk.

The other two had to get out before she did, their homes lying in a different direc-

tion. It was nearly dark when at last she got down, a few dozen yards from the house. But behind the band of pines along the horizon the west still glowed a faint pink, fading into lemon, and through the palest green into blue, the very colors of mother-of-pearl, she thought, standing a while in the quiet road to look up into the sky. A star or two trembled in the deep sapphire overhead; the air was cold and keen, but pure and invigorating as spring water.

"Oh, it is beautiful here," she said, aloud, and turned at the sound of a step behind her. It was Luiz Noronha, who had come up unperceived.

"Yes, beautiful," he said. "Whatever else we miss, we have sky and sea, the pure air and the golden sunshine—they are always ours."

"And many other things besides," she said.

"Yes, many other things besides. I am quite content with my share of the world this evening. And you, *priminha?*"

"Oh, so am I," said Mollie, looking up with a happy little laugh. It was no doubt

some memory of her talk with Sybil Meredith which made her blush so furiously all at once when their eyes met. At any rate, a sudden shyness tied her tongue till they reached the house and turned in at the gate together.

CHAPTER XV

PAYMENT

GUIDA put down the opera-glasses with a sigh of impatience, and moved back from the veranda into the room behind, the spacious room in which, on the night of their arrival in Madeira, she had helped to get her grandmother safely ensconced in bed. She had not left it since. She was not dangerously ill, said the doctor, only very weak and languid, and complete rest was the only medicine—rest and freedom from excitement of any kind, and good nursing. That she got in fullest measure—Guida was a born nurse.

"So unlike your mother, dear one," the old lady had remarked once. "She was almost helpless by a sick-bed, as I had occasion to learn, poor child, poor child. Indeed, it was not to be wondered at. You are not a bit like your mother, Mollie."

"No?" asked Guida. "I suppose that I am more like my father, then?"

The old lady's eyes wandered critically over the slight form, and the pale face, faintly flushing under her look.

"Yes," she said, "and yet not so like as I had thought from some of your portraits. You have a look of Diogo; yes, a look of him—his smile perhaps, and yet not entirely that. The sunshine is wanting, the frank gaiety which was such a characteristic of his. Did you lose that in the cold north?"

"Oh, it is not always cold in the north," said Guida. "There are sunny days there, too."

"And there are gloomy ones here, bitter days of gloom and sorrow, when the sunshine mocks our grief and the flowers only bloom to be made into funeral wreaths."

She had closed her eyes then, and dropped off into one of the long, half-waking spells of drowsiness in which she often passed hours, while the girl, slipping away after a moment, had fallen to the nervous pacing in which she spent most of her leisure, up and down the veranda,

with its view of the sea to the north, whence was to come the reward for her deception.

And now at last the morning had arrived. The ship was due in a couple of hours at latest, and Dr. Sartorius had himself set off to meet the traveler and bring him ashore. He was to lodge at the Sanatorium, of course, and besides helping the doctor, to attend seriously to the business of his own health.

After casting a look at her grandmother, who still lay asleep, Guida stepped out on the veranda again, and took up the glass. This time she held it to her eyes longer than before, and her hand began to tremble a little. Surely she was not mistaken. There was a speck on the horizon which had not been there the last time she looked, a pennon of smoke, perhaps, or the funnel of a ship. Even as she watched, shaking with eager excitement, the stain grew and grew, till at last there was no possibility of error. It was surely the mail, the boat which would bring John Martyn from the fogs of London to the golden sunshine of the South, from

danger of death back to health and happiness.

"What day is it?" asked Donna Guilhermina the next time she went in. She had awakened refreshed from a better sleep than usual, and was less languid this morning. Then when Guida told her of the coming of the ship:

"There will be letters for both of us, I expect. For you one from Rathmor, direct this time, for me a business letter from London, which I am awaiting with some interest. One is never quite rich enough, and you will be the one to profit in the end. You will be something of an heiress, my Margarida, one of these days, for all I have will be yours."

"Not for a long time, I hope," answered she, and then after a moment, summoning up courage to seize the opportunity. "Have you no other relatives at all, then?"

"No, none near enough to count. You and I are the only Alvarengas of Freamunde left, child."

"We two alone? And so my father was as lonely a child as I?"

There was a silence. Guida had turned away while she asked her question, busying herself with the bottles on the table. But from where she stood the bed was clearly reflected in the glass, and it seemed to her that the old lady had paled a little. The silence grew oppressive. She struggled to find something else to say, some careless remark to destroy the effect of premeditation in her words, but her lips were dry and the lump in her throat choked her. Then, after a pause which seemed endless, Donna Guilhermina spoke.

"Why do you ask me that, Margarida? Have they told you? Your mother, perhaps? Oh, no, she would not have told. But you know that your father had a brother?"

Guida turned and faced her. "Yes," she said, "so much I heard."

"And no more? Well, it was enough. Your father had a brother—and he is dead."

"But suppose he left a child?"

Donna Guilhermina had closed her eyes as if to ward off further questioning. Guida would not let the chance slip. This time she could see the effect of her words. The

old lady half raised herself, and said, with a return of the old imperious manner, which Lucy Hamer had once described:

"Margarida, come here."

Then, when the girl had approached reluctantly and stood beside the bed: "Tell me," she went on, laying a thin, withered old hand on the girl's cool young one, "you have heard something; you know something. What made you ask me that?"

For a moment Guida hesitated, but there was something compelling in the look in the keen dark eyes, and it was impossible to keep silence.

"Yes," she said slowly. "I heard that Alvaro Alvarenga had married in America, and that he had left a daughter."

"You heard—but never mind how. Suppose your information is correct. Why do you speak to me of her?"

"She is your grandchild, too." Again she paused and again the compelling old eyes made her continue. "You spoke of an inheritance. She ought to have her share."

For a moment the keen eyes searched her face, as if to probe to her very soul, then a

look of infinite contentment and joy stole over the proud old countenance, and the lips softened into a smile of which Guida would never have thought them capable.

"I see that Diogo is not altogether dead," said his mother proudly. "You did right to speak, child, and I shall not forget what you tell me. One day you will understand."

She loosened her hand she held, and let herself sink back on her pillows. Guida stood for a moment in bewilderment, then, all at once, she understood. The blood rushed to her cheeks. She took a step forward. Oh, that was more than she could bear! All that was true and honest in her rose up against the deception. The look of proud contentment seemed to sear her very soul. She would speak, come what might. She would confess the truth.

And then, as she opened her lips to speak, loud and clear from the port below rose the shriek of the siren. The mail had arrived. She stopped short. Now, when the reward was at hand, was now the moment? In one glance she saw all that it would mean. No, she must win forgiveness and

secrecy from her grandmother before John knew anything. And the truth he must never know. That she had done it for him would be no excuse, rather a greater wrong. She could imagine the scorn in his honest eyes. No, he must profit, but he must never know.

"No, no; it is not too late. Of course not!" said the old German doctor, when she waylaid him on his way down from the hotel to the Sanatorium late that evening to make him tell the truth about his patient, whose thinness and hollow eyes had alarmed her, and who was now luxuriously resting in his cheerful room, full of renewed hope for the future.

"No, it is not too late," repeated the old doctor, "though it is perhaps none too soon. Those fogs of London are no sort of thing for a weak chest."

"But now you are not deceiving me?"

The doctor looked paternally down at the pale face raised to his. Guida was standing just inside the low wall of the *quinta,* which on that side bordered the road running down from the hotel. It was not the

first time she had come out thus in the dark under the stars to ask the doctor a question or give some scrap of information about her grandmother, who had taken such a fancy to the ponderous, fatherly old German, that she had kept him on as her own doctor.

"Now, now, can you not trust an old friend?" he said. "John is weak, and his lungs are certainly attacked—you see I hide nothing. But with care there is no reason why he should not grow strong again. Not strong enough, perhaps, to risk again a doctor's life in London; but it does not seem as if that would be altogether necessary."

"No, doctor, I hope not," said Guida, though with the memory of the morning's scene a sharp pang of shame made her blush even in the dark.

The doctor nodded cheerfully. "I thought as much," he said. "Well, well, all the better. Good luck to you both. And do not be afraid. There is plenty of life in him yet, and this climate will, please God, help to keep it there."

Guida said the words over to herself as she hastened up to the house, through the

avenue paved with little white stones over which the moon threw a black lace tracery of palm-leaves.

She paused at the top of the walk to look out over the panorama around her, the hill slopes set here and there with a cluster of lights, the infinite expanse of sea, the jeweled vault above, where the stars quivered and burned with a fiery radiance never seen in northern skies.

She gave a sigh for the exquisite beauty of the scene, and then turned away with a little shiver. There was a shadow between her and heaven, a weight which bore her heart down, as sorrow and loneliness and hardship had never had the power to do.

"But I can not be sorry," she said to herself. "I can not, if it saves John's life. Oh, God, I will suffer, I will take my punishment, but do not let me have cheated and lied in vain. Let me have my payment, too."

CHAPTER XVI

MAFALDA'S SECRET

IT WAS Christmas morning. Mollie rubbed her eyes sleepily as she realized, by the loud and joyous voices of the children at the door, that it was time to get up. She glanced at the little clock by her bedside, then sat up with a feeling of guiltiness, for the hands pointed to a quarter past ten. Then she remembered that her religious duties were safely accomplished and that she had not stolen the privilege of sleeping late.

It had been a most beautiful and devotional ceremony, that of Midnight Mass, or rather Masses, for all three had been said one after the other, in accordance with ancient privilege, without a break between. They had set out about half-past eleven for the house of that elderly cousin, in which Mollie had assisted at her first evening party in Portugal. There was as large a gather-

ing as on that occasion, consisting as before of relatives in every degree of nearness. The chapel, not large, but perfect in its every detail, from the antique tortoise-shell and ivory crucifix to the silver extinguisher for the candles, was crowded all over its kneeling space by the richly-dressed crowd, the ladies all wearing the black lace mantilla of which the use out-of-doors has all but died out in Portugal. Communion had been given during the Middle Mass, and after the third, the beautiful little figure of the Child, taken from the Crib, was handed by the priest from one to another, who kissed the tiny feet. A little later, supper or the *réveillon,* in no detail different from a ball-supper, had been served, and then they had hastened homeward through the quiet streets, patrolled only by the mounted couples of the Municipal Guard, looking like dark ghosts in the cold light.

"Have you remembered the sweets, *prima?*" asked Alegria as the pair came in, their hands full of violets.

"*Boas festas, prima,* these are for you," said Nuno, separating a big bunch from the

rest. "The others are to put in mother's slipper, like we always do. And here are your letters."

"May I have the stamps?" asked Alegria, perching herself on the edge of the bed. "But Nuno wants the Funchal one."

Mollie yawned luxuriously, sniffing at her fragrant bunch of great Princess of Wales violets. Funchal seemed very far away and vague this golden morning. Surely Guida was not having so pleasant a Christmas as she!

"*Boas festas,* and thanks," she said. "The sweets are in the silver net bag your sisters gave me. I could only get a few; every one wanted some to take home to the children. I will give you the stamps later. These flowers are surely not all out of the garden?"

"Oh, no; we buyed them at the Anjo market," said Alegria, her mouth full of caramel, "after Mass. We went to nine o'clock at Carmo, you know, the one where the Municipals go, and they play the music all the time, and present arms at the Elevation. We like that one best, Nuno and I."

"But to-day there were three Masses,"

said Nuno. "Every one hears three to-day. And in the second one they play the pipes, to make the shepherd's music. It is awfully pretty."

It was only after a leisurely toilet that Mollie set to work to read her letters, and even then she left the Funchal one to the last. It had occurred to her that there would probably be some message from her grandmother, summoning her to Madeira, perhaps, the last thing she wished for. It would be almost as great a wrench now to leave Oporto, she felt, as it had been in the beginning to leave her old home in Ireland.

But there was no message in the letter written a week before Christmas—from which she gathered that Guida had not yet found the occasion of making her confession. For the rest, it contained, besides some good wishes, a short explanation of Guida's conduct, too short, thought Mollie, reading the account, which brief as it was, had cost her reticent cousin more effort than she guessed.

"John Martyn," said she when she had

read it through a second time. "John! There are much prettier names than that. Poor Guida! No wonder she hardly minded what she did. But it would have been much simpler to have told me straight out. I would have asked grandmamma first thing, and there would have been none of this double dealing. I feel as if she had really played me a good turn, for I am as happy as can be. Yet it does not seem fair to our grandmother, who has always been so kind."

This aspect of the question haunted her with something of the feeling of a neglected duty, till, after dinner, she had an opportunity of talking it over with Luiz, who had dined with them, as he generally did on more festive occasions, to avoid the solitary dinner at home. It was years since Donna Guiomar had been able to sit at the table.

After dinner they were in the habit of gathering in a small drawing-room opening out of the larger one, which was used only on state occasions, and out of which, on the other side, opened Senhor Alva-

renga's study. As often happened he betook himself there almost immediately after dinner, while Donna Carlotta settled herself comfortably in an arm-chair by the fire and the young people gathered round the lamp-lighted table at the other end of the room, ostensibly to play a round game of cards. But as often happened also, especially of late, Mafalda quietly effaced herself almost as soon as they had settled down, and Soledade, opening the piano, began to play softly to herself. The two children soon wandered off to the passage outside to try their new balls, so that Mollie and Luiz were practically alone.

The young man listened in silence to her explanation of her difficulty.

"I do not see what you can do," he said, when she had finished. "If Donna Guilhermina is to be spared all agitation—and I can imagine how it would agitate her to know that Alvaro's daughter was beside her."

"Why? Alvaro was her son just as much as my own father."

"True: he was even her favorite son for

many years, so much the favorite that some people thought the difference was too clearly marked to be fair. But not Diogo himself. Of all Alvaro's admirers, and they were legion, he was one of the most sincere. Alvaro was one of those children whom every one spoils, they say, one of those handsome, captivating boys, who fascinate high and low without any effort on their part. Diogo was of another stamp, a quiet, sturdy little fellow, staunch as steel, always cheerfully anxious to do his best, but neither very brilliant nor very sparkling—only reliable and honest to the core."

"You knew them both?"

"Alvaro I knew only as a child knows a man, but Diogo, though he was ten years older than I, was my dear friend, one of those friends whose influence helps to shape a man's character, and whom one never loses. Death only seals the bond and makes it unbreakable."

"You make me jealous," said Mollie. "I never *knew* my father. I have nothing of him but a childish memory."

"And his blood in your veins, his quali-

ties in your heart. Why, little cousin, sometimes it seems to me that Diogo's self is looking out of those blue eyes of yours. It was just such eyes he had—a sailor's eyes, far-seeing and clear. The sea was in his blood. The same roving spirit which in Alvaro turned to a restless desire for change and excitement, in him was a passion for the salt water, the sea, on which you know, long before Britain dreamed of its queenship, we Portuguese were at home. And in him, his mother did not oppose it. As long as she had Alvaro at home, the second son might wander if he wanted to. It was not that she did not love him, you understand. There was no shadow between them. I do not think that Diogo ever felt a shade of bitterness at the preference given to his brother. He had been brought up to the same worship his mother lavished, and it came natural. Later when Alvaro went wrong—I never knew the details, and indeed they were hushed up, and he hurried out of the country as speedily as might be—and Diogo was summoned home, then I know he had a hard struggle to go through.

His profession was very dear to him, both of itself, and for the chance of serving his country. But he never grumbled. No one ever guessed, I think, what it cost him to give up all thought of a career in the navy and settle down as a country gentleman. It was not till later, when he helped me with a private cross of my own, that I got a glimpse of what his own fight had been. And by then it was over. He had found unexpected happiness in his new life, when he met your mother. I can just remember their wedding. A pair of children, people called them, and indeed your father was barely twenty and your mother only just eighteen. But they were made for each other. Some deeds of virtue get a reward even in this life, and I know that Diogo tasted true happiness."

"But it did not last long," said Mollie.

"No, it did not last long. Death came in the full tide of health and happiness."

"I never knew how he fell ill," said Mollie. "Do you know what illness it was?"

There was a moment's silence, then Luiz answered:

"No. I left him perfectly well. I was hurried back from Oporto to find him dying. There was only time to press his hand. He could not even speak. But he died peacefully, with the same simple courage with which he faced each trial of his life. Your mother was brave, too, though her heart was broken. But Donna Guilhermina was never the same again."

"I suppose in the end mothers all love best the children they lose," said Mollie, musingly. "But she still had one son left."

"He died about the same time, though no one knows exactly when or where, except his mother. She never mentions his name. And no one knew or guessed that he had married and left a daughter."

"Poor Guida!" said Mollie. "She has had a dreary life. I can not help feeling more sorry for her than angry with her."

"And I," rejoined Luiz, "far from feeling angry with her, on the contrary owe her a debt of gratitude, a double debt. Can you guess why, little Mollie?"

He said the last words in a lower tone, bending toward her. Looking up, she met

his eyes, those dark eyes in which she was growing accustomed to see the look of sadness replaced by something very different when they rested on her. The quick blood rushed to her cheeks, but she was spared the trouble of finding an answer by Soledade, who suddenly ended the dreamy, slow piece she had been playing with a great chord which rang through the silent room. It woke Donna Carlotta from the peaceful doze into which she had fallen over her French magazine.

"Oh, Soledade, what a noise!" she exclaimed, sitting up and looking round. "Mafalda, where is she?"

"Here I am, mother," said the young lady, entering the room through the curtained doorway which shut off the inner and larger drawing-room. A breath of cold air hung around her, and her eyes were very bright under her dark lashes. There was, moreover, a color in her cheeks which made her look positively lovely, Mollie thought. She was staring at her in surprise, when Mafalda slipped into the chair be-

side her, and catching her hand under cover of the table, gave it an ecstatic squeeze.

Soledade took up the cards which had lain neglected since the beginning of the evening, but at that moment Senhor Alvarenga called Luiz from his study to come and look over some papers. He got up at once and made his farewells, knowing by experience that his cousin's talks over the scientific questions in which he was passionately interested were lengthy ones.

There was a smile in his eyes as he bade Mafalda good-night and pleasant dreams.

"The same to you, Cousin Luiz," she said, with a mischievous emphasis, and was answered with a boyish chuckle which seemed to Mollie to come straight out of the long-ago days they had been reviving together.

But Mafalda had no time to waste over any but her own affairs.

"Soledade," she said, once the three were alone, "you need not have played so loud—not that it matters much really. I was already getting afraid of his catching cold. To-morrow he is going to papa's office during the afternoon, and then as soon as he

allows it—next week, I hope—I shall be *pedida.*" Then seeing Mollie's look of blank puzzlement. "Asked for, you know, in marriage."

"But by whom?"

"By whom?" It was Mafalda's turn to open astonished eyes. "Do you really mean you do not know? And I was admiring the clever way you hid it. But, of course, you know. You have seen him often on the road outside, and at church, and at Aunt Alcina's and several other places. Why, you even danced with him once. And I nearly quarrelled with him because he said he thought you so pretty until he made up by saying that you talked all the time about me."

But still Mollie shook a bewildered head. Sybil Meredith's explanations, joined to one or two details which now came to her mind, convinced her easily enough that Mafalda had a love-affair, but with which of the young men who greeted them with bows and smiles in the street, and asked for dances in the few small parties they had been to she was quite unable to say, till all at once

she remembered the incident of the motor-car at Thelude, and the face of the driver she had since been introduced to.

"Oh, I know," she said. "It is Vasco Lemos de Castello, who motors so much and so well. And are you really going to marry him?"

Mafalda nodded beamingly. "I know it will be all right with papa, and his family is all right. They are relatives of mamma's brother-in-law. Mamma knows about it, of course, though I have never told her. Every one always knows these things, the minute a man looks twice at a girl. Why, last night at supper, several people asked me when you and ——"

She stopped short. Mollie's look of astonishment was belied by her burning cheeks, but Soledade, standing behind her, had turned deathly white. Mafalda got up suddenly and put an arm round her sister.

"Soledade, my Soledade," she whispered, "if only one could share happiness!" Soledade returned her caress with a convulsive hug, then pushed her gently away.

"There," she said, "mother is looking at us. Go and tell her all about it. Mollie and I are going upstairs to bed."

CHAPTER XVII

JOHN MARTYN IS CURIOUS

GUIDA was living in a dream of happiness, a fragile dream, from which at any moment a chance word, the sound of a cough, a thought, even, would rouse her, but to which, by reason of its very fragility, she clung the more desperately. And, indeed, though as far as the older invalid was concerned, matters remained stationary, the mild air, steeped through and through with sunshine, was working wonders with the younger one. The old doctor rubbed his hands with satisfaction at every sign of his colleague's returning energy.

"I knew this place would do you good," he said. "How can it be otherwise? What self-respecting microbe can live in this air? It makes even an old fellow like me feel quite brisk again."

"But it does no good, apparently, to your patient up at the *Quinta das Heras,*" said John. "Guida tells me that she continues as weak as ever."

"Oh, I never said that it would cure old age, else there would be no standing-room left in the group, and Portugal's financial difficulties would vanish by magic. No, no."

"She is not so very old."

"Not as years go, perhaps, though she is not young. But our hearts are only made to bear so much fatigue, you know, and if they are over-burdened in one way or another, well, their energy gives out before its time."

"She has had great troubles, then?"

The old doctor nodded. "She has had a sad life enough, if one can believe the stories they tell about her here in the island. She married young, quite young, a man whom she loved deeply, and for a time they were ideally happy. But not for long. There is a strain of adventurousness in the Alvarenga blood, which made them among the boldest of those old adventurers

who sailed the unknown seas, when your ancestors and mine—or mine at any rate—were living peacefully in some little walled city in safe seclusion. But it is less useful in modern times, and it drove this lady's husband to chafe at home life and home duties before his marriage was a year old. But the birth of her first son consoled her for much neglect on her husband's part, and she had her reward for her patience—of a sort. He came back from his lawless wanderings at last and she forgave him. Another son was born and then, when some sort of happiness might have been expected, the husband fell ill and died, all in a few weeks. That was hard enough, but not yet the hardest, perhaps, for her heart was wrapped up in her children, especially the eldest, a clever, fascinating boy, just like his father. Too like, for when he reached the age for it he followed the same courses, and even worse, and in the end had to leave the country. The other son, on all accounts his very opposite was doing his best to make up for his elder's conduct, when he, too,

died suddenly, almost mysteriously, leaving only his little daughter."

John had listened attentively to the story. Knowing from Guida that she had been born in America, and had so far never seen her own land, he concluded that she could not be the daughter mentioned. She must, therefore, be the child of the prodigal, which would account for her isolation from her family. For the rest, he was still quite in ignorance of how, having gone out to Oporto as a governess, with only a vague hope of finding her father's family, she came to be installed in Madeira as the granddaughter and heiress of one of the richest ladies of the island. So far he had been too busy with the details of his new life, too intoxicated with the novelty and the beauty around him, to press for the details, which she had promised to give him one day. But the doctor's story had excited a sudden curiosity, a vague uneasiness even, for which he could imagine no reason, and he resolved to question her on the next opportunity.

It came that same afternoon.

Guida had deserted the terrace as a resort for her hours of leisure, which she spent now in the long walk at the bottom of the *Quinta*. At the end, where the wall turned at an obtuse angle, some one had built, in former days, what the Portuguese call a *mirante*. The Arab word described very well the deep embrasure, heavily barred and closed by heavy wooden shutters, which, when opened, gave a splendid view over hillside and ocean, to say nothing of the quiet road which ran below, deeply bordered on the side furthest from the wall with dusty blue-green cacti, and on the nearer side rising to within some six feet of the curved iron bars. In the first days of his stay, John Martyn had rebelled against the necessity of following the customs of the place, and instead of walking freely into the villa, speaking only in what might seem a clandestine manner to his promised wife. He was a man who carried his honesty and his hatred of pretence to a degree almost fanatical in its intensity. But the old doctor, who knew more of the customs of the country than the newcomer,

showed him that while it was impossible to speak to Donna Guilhermina, his frankness would only place the girl in a false position. Besides, it was not easy to see anything particularly clandestine in conversation thus carried on in the view of the whole countryside, so to speak.

John had given a grumbling submission and turned his walks in the direction of the *mirante*. When it was closed, he would merely pass on and explore in some other direction; when open, he knew that Guida was in the neighborhood.

This golden afternoon, when the sun, almost too oppressive, made the date on his newspaper seem a mockery, and foggy London a mere nightmare of the past, he found Guida already waiting for him when he reached the *mirante*.

"I can stay quite a long time this afternoon," she said, "because my grandmother has sent for a lawyer to talk over some business. How I wish we could go for a walk together. But it would scandalize the whole countryside. You see I am supposed to be quite Portuguese."

"And yet you are half of the most independent people in the whole world. Does not your American blood rebel against such restraints?"

A shade passed over her face.

"Not under the circumstances," she said. "You see I am getting really fond of my grandmother, though I have known her so short a time."

"Blood will tell," he said sententiously. From all I hear, the affection is mutual. Tell me—remember I know nothing of your meeting—was she not surprised to find that she had a second granddaughter?"

"A second?" Guida turned pale, but recovered herself with an effort. "Who told you that she had another?"

"Why, the doctor. At least I gathered as much from his story of Donna Guilhermina's two sons."

"What did he tell you?" asked Guida. It cost her an effort to speak calmly, and yet in spite of the fear which made her heart beat so wildly that it seemed as if it must choke her, there was a feeling of re-

lief, too. If only she could speak out and tell the truth, and breathe freely again.

John repeated the information the doctor had given him.

"So, as you told me you were born in America, I concluded that you are the daughter of the son who left the country and that you have a cousin."

"Quite right, I have—a most charming girl, too, and an important person in the strange little drama of my finding my family. I told you it was quite a story. But first of all, John, tell me. My father—I do not know what he did, but I fear it was nothing honorable. Does it not make any difference to you—what he did?"

John looked up at her in surprise.

"Why, no. You are not your father. If you had been dishonest and dishonorable—but that is nonsense."

"You do not believe in heredity, I see." Guida's voice was faint. How could she ever confess? He would surely cast her off.

"Let us distinguish," said John, with a smile. It was his usual formula. How

often, in their interminable talks on every subject under the sun, had she heard him use it. "Let us distinguish. If by heredity, you mean the passing on of vices, bad habits, diseases, no. We all have our own souls, our own personalities. But if you mean tendencies, taste, predispositions, the thousand shades which make one personality differ from another, yes, to a certain extent. But since every one person is a product of two other personalities, the one may so modify the other as to counteract almost any tendency."

"Yes, I know," said she. "The sons of the worst men are sometimes saints."

"Yes, but that argument does not prove much, because the mothers of saints are very often saints, too. And besides, there is the question of grace to be considered in that connection. But I want to hear your story. That is much more interesting than any argument just now. No matter what your father was, you are the girl whom I love just because of your straightforward honesty and frankness. Why, the very thing which first attracted me to you was

the unfeminine straightness of your sense of duty, the complete absence of those small subterfuges which some people find charming, but which I hate. How, then, can I fear that you may have inherited your father's weaknesses?"

"I will tell you how it happened," said Guida, almost interrupting him. Perhaps the courage to tell the whole truth would come as she went on. "When you left me on the deck of the *Guadiana,"* she began, and went on to tell him of how she had watched him out of sight, and then descending to the cabin, had caught on the very threshold of the door her own name applied to another, who could only be her cousin, a suspicion confirmed by the reading of the address on the box of china, the address which corresponded with the name on the newspaper cutting which she had found in her father's pocket-book. She went on to tell him some of the incidents of the voyage.

"And then when we reached Oporto—" she paused for a moment.

"Well," he said, "you told her who you

were, I suppose? I wonder you did not tell her at once."

"I ought to have done so. I wish I had, but I did not like to. I felt afraid, because of my father. Well, then—"

Suddenly she stood back from the grating in the attitude of listening.

"They are calling me, John. That is old Cacilda's voice. *'Menina, O menina, O Senhora Donna Margarida!'* I must go. Mollie was afraid of the journey, else she would probably have come. I am a good sailor, so I came with our grandmother instead of her. And when I got here Dr. Sartorius told me—but I wrote you that. Au revoir, John, I must go!"

She bent down hastily, their hands met. A second later she had turned away, and was hurrying down the long path toward the house. John followed the graceful white-clad figure with his eyes, till at the angle of the path she turned and waved him a farewell with her hand. Then he turned away from the *mirante,* and pursued his way down the dusty road toward the sea. The vague uneasiness, which was

haunting him since the morning, had rather increased than otherwise.

"She is not the same," he said to himself, walking with bent head between the bordering hedges topped with dusty cacti. "Can it be that fortune is already changing her, my frank, fearless Guida? She will be rich, very rich, they say, and I—" He shook off the thought, but it buzzed round him for all that, paling the sunshine, and clogging the joyous beating of his heart. For the first time he felt the sense of obligation in place of the loving gratitude with which he had accepted her intervention in his life; for the first time, a shadow had fallen on his love.

CHAPTER XVIII

MAFALDA'S ENGAGEMENT

GUIDA found the old servant, Cacilda, waiting for her on the steps of the terrace. "The Senhor Notario is leaving," she said. "The Senhora wishes you to see him. He will, perhaps, take some wine and biscuits. I will tell Jacintho to prepare the tray."

Guida knew the notary, having met him once or twice before, when he came up to talk over business matters with Donna Guilhermina. He was a fatherly old man, who had greeted her always with a smile and a cordial handshake. This afternoon, to her surprise, he bowed ceremoniously, and his face remained grave.

"Will you not take something?" she asked. "A glass of wine, or water and wine, like last time?"

She had herself prepared him a glass of water tinted with port, and sugared to

taste, which she had found to be a favorite refreshment among her countrymen.

"Nothing, thank your Excellency," he said. Guida started at the term. There are infinite shades of ceremony in the Portuguese manner of address, from the familiar "thou," employed only with children and intimates, to "your excellency," and "your grace," which, far from being reserved for ambassadors and dukes, is applied to every one. Moreover, you address your shoemaker on an envelope as "most illustrious" and every lady is "most excellent." But Guida had so far been *"menina"* for the old man, and the stiff term, as well as the look of cold disapprobation in his eyes, chilled her.

"Nothing at all, servant of your excellency," he added, and bowed himself out.

"What can it mean?" she asked herself, half aloud.

"He is not pleased, and no wonder," said old Cacilda, carrying away the tray. "The *menina* should have kept silence. It is not Senhor Diogo, God speak to his soul, who would have acted thus."

Guida found Donna Guilhermina a little excited by the notary's visit.

"It had to be done," she said. "I only did what I ought. And yet, Margarida, I can not help feeling sorry you told me."

"I did it for the best, grandmamma," said Guida, greatly puzzled. But she had little time to think the matter over. Toward evening, the old lady's agitation increased, and it became evident that she was very feverish. Guida sent at once for Dr. Sartorius, who gave her a cooling medicine. But in spite of it, the fever did not abate. She began to stir restlessly and after a while to talk. There was no coherence in her speeches, and only a word or two here and there which one could understand at all, but it was easy to guess what thought filled her troubled brain, for the names of her two sons, Diogo and the one she had not mentioned for years, came back again and again. Once the girl, watching in great anxiety during the long slow hours, caught a phrase which seemed to make sense, though its meaning was beyond her.

"He forgave him, Moira, I know that he

forgave him—but how can his mother forgive?"

"Moira" was, she knew, Mollie's mother, the young wife who had so soon followed her beloved husband to the grave. The words haunted her with a sense of mystery, deeper and darker than any she had guessed at. But she would not let her thoughts dwell upon them, till at last the invalid ceased her mutterings and fell into a troubled sleep, and the old servant, whom she had sent to rest for a few hours, coming in, relieved her of her vigil.

On entering her own room, Guida threw open the shutters and leaned out for a space into the dusk. There was as yet no sign of dawn, though in an hour it would be full day, but only the biggest stars still showed in the steely sky and there was a peculiar hush as of expectancy over sea and land. On the slopes below a pale light gleamed here and there among the trees, showing where the early risers were already astir, but there was no other sign of life in all the wide expanse. It seemed incredible that so soon the day would be here, the cheerful

day, with its golden light and long, sunny hours. The girl turned away with a shiver. No sunshine could pierce the heavy cloud of fear and misgiving that was gathering in her heart, and was yet perhaps easier to bear that the clear knowledge behind. No, let her doubt while she might, and meanwhile there was sleep, blessed sleep, which for a space meant forgetfulness and peace. Hastily undressing, she crept between the sheets and a few minutes later had indeed ceased to fear and worry.

It must have been very much at the same hour of this clear, cold morning that Mollie stood, too, at her window, after a sleepless night, and watched the clouds faintly flushing to pink and gold in the east. But there were no anxious forebodings in Mollie's heart, only a delicious expectancy, and instead of the echoes of a sick woman's delirious mutterings, the gay strains of a waltz rang in her ears.

The day before had been the one on which her cousin's hand had been asked for by his parents, for their son, Vasco Lemos de Castello, and graciously accorded,

as had naturally been settled beforehand, by her father and mother. The ceremony had been followed by a grand dinner, which united the two families, and that again by a gay little dance, which had lasted till within an hour of dawn. Then, when all the guests had departed, there had been a long family chatter over the details of the affair, and when the girls had been finally routed off to bed by their mother, another long confabulation of the three young people in their own bedroom. Mollie felt that she was now entirely admitted to their confidence. She had learned all the details of the long courtship, beginning with the admiring glances cast by Vasco at Mafalda on the Passeio Alegre at Foz.

"Ah, the Passeio Alegre," said Mollie. She herself had found them very dull, those interminable walks up and down the public promenade opposite the row of bright-colored villas which bordered the sea, down at Foz, the "mouth" as its name indicates of the river. It had occurred to her more than once, and she had even ventured to express the thought, that it would be far

more interesting to walk on the further side of the garden, where there was not only nothing like such a crowd, but a beautiful view of the sea, of which nothing more than a glimpse could be obtained from the Passeio.

The girls had at once acquiesced with their usual amiability, and they had made the round past the palm-tree and along the sea-wall. But when they reached the end, she found that, intentionally or otherwise, their steps led them back to the Passeio again, the "Delectable Promenade" as Lucy Hamer translated it, and so she had said no more. Now she understood the secret charm of the narrow space where one could only move at foot-pace up and down between the road and the gardens, because of the crowd.

"For a while I never returned his looks," continued Mafalda, "but one day I heard something about him, something really nice, a kindness he had done for a friend, so next time I just let him see that I knew he was there and then of course it went on. After a while he got himself introduced, though

by then I knew lots about him, and we danced together whenever we could. But the worst of it is you can not talk much during a waltz. It is not like in England, where you can sit out. That would not be allowed here. But he began to pass the house very often, sometimes in his car—I knew the sound of his siren—and sometimes on horseback. Motors are very useful. Once we had a breakdown right out in the country and he came along and took mother and me on to the next village and then sent back the chauffeur to help father."

"That was a lucky chance, his happening to pass," said Mollie.

The two sisters exchanged glances.

"Yes, it was lucky," said Mafalda. "Well of course, he had begun to write almost from the first, and then there is the telephone, which is very useful."

"Oh, yes," said Mollie, with conviction. It had taken her a very short time to get accustomed to the use of that instrument, which she found an old-established, widespread, and much utilized institution in the town, and after the first awkwardness had

worn off to imitate her cousins and enjoy long talks through it. She had the additional advantage that by making use of English, she could express her feelings more freely than they, who having to use the language understood by all, had sometimes to have recourse to various ingenious subterfuges to keep their meaning sacred to the one at the other end of the wire.

"Then," continued Mafalda. "I let him come here. But not very often, not every night. Some nights, you see, we were not at home ourselves. And now you know the rest. I know father likes him, and mother is awfully pleased, really, though she will cry like anything on my wedding-day. But she likes Vasco, too, and he is simply in love with her, and indeed with the whole family. He is so pleased to have brothers and sisters at last, as well as a *noiva*."

Mollie had listened attentively and with great interest, though not with any view of profiting by the experience thus acquired. She knew that if any day she had to tell her love-story, its beginning would be very

different from that of Mafalda. Its beginning would date back, far back to the days of her childhood, when every memory she could conjure up was somehow intertwined with the presence of a dark-haired, laughing boy, who petted and played with her, and whom she had lost with the old life, but found again with the new, a living link with the beloved dead past and the best part of the present. As to the future, it was vague as yet, but golden—like the rosy dawn, all glowing with the sun as yet unseen but soon to rise above the horizon.

Mollie shivered, too, as her cousin had done when she turned away from the window and sought her neglected bed, but it was not with any apprehension—rather with the luxurious shiver of expectation and a little sigh of utter content. Soon the sun would rise upon another golden day of pleasant intercourse and ever-ripening hopes, perhaps even upon their fulfilment!

CHAPTER XIX

GUIDA AND JOHN MARTYN

"BUT you will tell me, doctor, if you think that there is really no hope?" It was Guida who spoke, a white-faced Guida, with eyes red with much watching and many tears. The old doctor shook his head reprovingly.

"There is always hope," he said, "always. But I will not hide from you that the old lady is in a very dangerous state. If I did not know that she had nothing to trouble her, I should say, moreover, that its cause lay more in the mind than the body. But what wearing anxiety can she have, and what agitation? Or did you perhaps tell her of your engagement? I can speak for John, you know, if she makes any great difficulty. And as far as his health goes, he is making a splendid recovery."

For a moment Guida's tired face bright-

ened, but the cloud returned almost at once.

"Yes, I know," she said, "though I have only seen him for a few minutes at a time, since that day the notary came, and she fell ill. You will explain to him that I really can not leave her?"

"Oh, he understands. He is not unreasonable."

"No," she said, but not joyfully. It was surely not fancy that John seemed hardly sorry that their interviews had been so short in the last ten days, any more than it was fancy that there was a shadow between them, something too vague to define and yet unmistakable.

"But I told her nothing of John," she continued, "so that can not worry her."

"Well, whatever it is that oppresses her, no doubt she will feel happier now she has sent for her confessor. At any rate she has saved you a very delicate and yet necessary task, by asking for him herself. And as far as her worldly affairs go, those she has already set in order, I believe, as far as the law allows her liberty of action."

"How do you mean, doctor?" asked Guida, the notary's coldness coming back to her memory. "Is she not free to do as she likes with her own?"

"Not by Portuguese law, when there are direct heirs present. You and your cousin must each have a third share of whatever she has to leave. It is only the remainder of which she can freely dispose.

"Oh, indeed," said Guida, "I did not know that."

So that the plea of seeking only for justice failed her. There had been no need for that revelation of the existence of a daughter of the outcast, which was almost certainly the agitating thought at the root of Donna Guilhermina's illness. Alvaro's daughter need only have bided her time, and all would have been well.

"But it was not for myself," she pleaded in that inner tribunal where the arraigned culprit already suffered the tortures of the condemned. The thought brought little relief.

"At any rate, dear child," continued the old doctor, answering half-unconsciously,

perhaps, her look of pain. "You have the consolation of knowing that you have done what you could. But for your care, she might not be alive now. That will always be your consolation."

"When I remember that I have perhaps caused her death," thought Guida, bitterly, as she watched the kind old man out of sight down the avenue of palm-trees leading to the gate, then turned back toward the sick-room, where she had of late passed the greater part of ten weary days and nights. But she did not enter. The old priest, whom Donna Guilhermina had sent for that morning, had arrived during the doctor's visit and was now with her. So Guida sat down in one of the long wicker chairs, made in the island, which furnished the veranda, and laid her weary head against a cushion, closing her eyes to shut out the golden light which seemed to mock her anxiety. It was very still, only a hum of insects filled the air, warmed through and through by the midday sunshine. From far below came a murmur made up of the noises of the distant town, and from the

other side of the *quinta,* where two women, barefooted, and with sleeves over their elbows, were washing in the big stone tank under an arbor of now leafless vines, the plaintive notes of a *fado* floated across to her:

"As amores, mais as pênas
Nasceram de uma só mãe;
So quem pena, tem amores,
So quem ama, pênas tem."

"Our loves as well as sorrows,
Are of one mother born;
Only he who suffers, loves,
Only he who loves, has sorrows."

Guida remembered the afternoon on the boat when Lucy Hamer had sung another verse to the same sad little tune, and she had listened for the first time to a song of her own land, her heart, so sorrowful just before at the parting with her betrothed, beating high with the unexpected good fortune of meeting her cousin and namesake on the very threshold of her enterprise. How high her hopes had run, and now—

Well, she had what she asked for, what had seemed more than she had dared to

hope. John was surely on the way to complete health, John, who had so short a time before been the one affection of her lonely life.

The plaintive song was very soothing, and the mild air made one drowsy after so many broken nights. Guida's closed eyes did not open when the priest, accompanied by Cacilda, passed out by the glass door on to the veranda and paused a moment beside her, his brown old face full of kindly sympathy.

"She never leaves her for more than a couple of hours at a time," whispered the woman. "She could not be more devoted."

The old man nodded. "A true Alvarenga," he said, looking at the pale face against the gay cushion, "and yet not much like her father, either."

"No, not at all like him, nor her mother. And yet, at times, her ways remind me strongly of the old master, Senhor Alvaro, the Senhora's husband, God speak to his soul."

Guida was still sleeping when Cacilda tip-toed past her again into the sick-room.

She had not stirred when, fully an hour later, the old woman came hurrying out, white-faced and alarmed.

"O menina, menina," she cried, "the Senhora is worse, the Senhora is dying."

The girl started to her feet bewildered. Cacilda seized her arm.

"Come quickly, she is calling for you! I fear she is dying, oh, heavenly Father, dying!"

She wrung her hands as she hastened behind Guida into the sick-room. The old lady, lying very white and still upon her pillows, turned a long, anguished look upon her granddaughter as she bent over her and tried in vain to speak.

"Go, Cacilda," said the girl, "and send at once for the doctor, any doctor, at once. Send Jacintho, the gardener, more than one messenger."

Cacilda hurried out and Guida, bending down again, held a glass of cordial to her grandmother's lips. With an effort she swallowed a drop or two, and, after a moment, something of the gray, deathlike shadow seemed to lift from her face.

"Margarida," she whispered, and then after a long pause, "there is something I want to tell you."

Guida bent over tenderly and wiped her damp forehead.

"Presently," she said. "Drink a little more of this."

Again she drank a few drops, and a faint tinge of color flowed back into her lips. She closed her eyes as if to gather all her strength, and then opening them, looked up into the girl's troubled face.

"Margarida," she said. "I meant to be firm, to be just only, but I have not the strength. I can not forget that he was my son, too."

She paused as if exhausted. Guida bent over her in alarm.

"Oh, you must not tire yourself," she said. "Rest, do not try to talk. The doctor will be here in a minute."

And indeed not more than five had passed when the doctor appeared, not the old German, but John Martyn, whom the gardener had stopped just outside the gate and begged to come at once. He nodded to

Guida, who looked up at him imploringly from her seat beside the bed, and bent over the patient, who lay once more with closed eyes, apparently in a state of stupor.

"What have you been giving her?" he asked, taking up the glass which she had put down, and smelling the contents. "Yes, that is right. Tell them to bring some brandy," he went on, and then, when Guida had given the order to Cacilda:

"That is all we can do for the present. The attack is due apparently to some agitation, reacting on a state of excessive weakness——"

"Is she dying?" whispered Guida, with dry lips.

He looked at her drawn white face with more of his old manner than he had shown so far.

"No, I do not think so," he said, very gently. "But she is old, you know, and has suffered much."

As if an echo to the words she could not have heard nor indeed understood came a wail from the sick woman.

"I have not the strength. He was my son, too."

John knitted his brows. He was a quick student of language and understood her meaning, though he himself could not speak Portuguese.

"Can you not relieve her mind?" he asked Guida. "If she could cease to worry, there would be a better chance for her."

But Guida shook her head helplessly as she clasped the thin hot hand in hers. Donna Guilhermina seemed to recognize her touch, for she opened her eyes and drew the girl feebly down toward her.

"I was just, Margarida," she said, clearly enough, though her voice hardly rose above a whisper, "but only the merciful can expect mercy. 'Alvaro's daughter is innocent of her father's crime. You will not let her want."

It was not a question, and she waited for no answer, but closed her eyes again wearily and turned a little as if seeking to sleep. After a moment's dead silence, John Martyn bent over her.

"She is sleeping," he whispered. "It is

the best remedy." With a gesture he motioned Guida away from the bedside, and with another signed to Cacilda to darken the room. A moment later he and Guida stood outside on the veranda. There was a set look on the young man's face as he turned to her.

"There is one thing I should like you to explain," he said in a voice, the coldness of which seemed all the more intense for its being so controlled and so low, "if you can, that is to say—and that is how you come to be here in your cousin's place?"

Guida's only answer was a dry sob. At the moment so many emotions were at war within her breast that John's anger seemed hardly to matter. She had known that the confession must come some time, but now—he might have spared her, she thought numbly, at least for a few hours. Of course all must be over between them. What was that Donna Guilhermina had said. "Her father's crime?" And she was dying!

A dark look crossed the young man's face as she kept silence and his lips tightened.

"If I remember rightly your explanation

was vague on that point the other day. It struck me at the time," he continued, "and to judge by what I have just heard, I am not the only one who was deceived. Donna Guilhermina does not know who you are?"

"No," said Guida. What had her father done that only the hand of death was strong enough to force a little pity for his daughter from his own mother's heart?

"Then you are here under false pretences?"

Guida bowed her head. If only she had never left the land of her birth! There she might have lived peacefully, and unknowing the dark secrets which in this country of sunshine and flowers made her an intruder and an outcast.

"I will not ask how you carried out the trick, and I need not ask its motive——"

She looked up then, a gleam of hope crossing her face. It had been for him, only for him! But he continued, casting a scornful look around him.

"The inheritance was fair enough, in all conscience, to tempt a less adventurous spirit. Well, I wish you joy of it. You will

excuse me, however, if I decline to have any part or parcel in it or its owner."

She made no protest, only looked at him —a long, strange look, which in spite of his righteous indignation, stirred something of the old affection he was crushing down so rigidly.

"Oh, Guida," he said in a burst of genuine passion and pain, "how could you? Was it all a cheat, your honest independence, and frank courage in facing the world, were they none of them genuine, the qualities which won my love?"

"Hush," she said, "you will wake her. If she sleeps she may yet be saved."

He moved away impatiently, forcing back the flood of words which rose to his lips. What was the use of words? Nothing could undo what had been done. The daughter of a prodigal, if not worse, she had justified the strain of evil blood in her. How had it come about that he, to whom truth and sincerity were the dearest things in life, had let himself be so deceived, be made the very accomplice of her cheating? Oh, it was maddening to think of! With-

out another word or look, he turned away, and passing from the shadow of the veranda into the blinding sunlight beyond, left her.

CHAPTER XX

THE DECLARATION

THE sun was shining that afternoon in Oporto also, but with a greatly diminished brilliance, a garish light which accentuated the keenness of the cold. The sky was pale blue instead of sapphire, and there was a cutting wind, which browned the edges of the camellias, growing everywhere in reckless profusion, and raised clouds of glittering granite-dust in the hilly streets. A great cloud of it, sweeping viciously by, nearly blinded Mollie when she stepped out of the car at the door of Donna Guiomar's house.

Ten days had passed since the festivities for Mafalda's engagement, ten busy days, for the wedding was to take place before Lent, and Easter was early that year. But in spite of her interest in the trousseau and the new house, Mollie had elected to spend this afternoon, as she had spent several of late, with the invalid lady. Luiz had been

called away on business to Lisbon the very day after the ball, and the rest of the family had done their best to relieve his mother's loneliness. It was a duty which had cost Mollie absolutely no effort, even though Soledade was too busy to make a third in the long talks they had together. It was even more interesting to talk of past times with Donna Guiomar, who had been her father's playmate long ago, than to discuss the future with Mafalda, entrancing though these discussions might be. She hardly knew Vasco, though ready enough to credit him with the possession of all the virtues which Mafalda found in him. But Luiz's mother, at least, could not be suspected of not knowing what she was talking about when she related incidents concerning her son, and summed up the perfections which adorned his character, some of which Mollie had even managed to discover for herself.

Yes, a visit to Donna Guiomar was anything but a penance, Mollie told herself, especially on this steely blue afternoon when the pavement rang metallically under

one's heels and the wind seemed to cut through one's thickest wraps, while a gentle warmth reigned in the light, pleasant room, always fragrant with flowers and exquisitely fresh and neat.

"It is so good of you to come, little Margarida," said Donna Guiomar, turning slowly on her pillows. "I was longing for a young face, and for yours more than any other. It was good of you to give an afternoon to me."

"It is good to be here with you," said Mollie, throwing off her furs, which for the first time that winter almost she had found appropriate to the temperature. "It is horrid outside and always delightful here."

"Especially when you are here," said Donna Guiomar.

Mollie laughed merrily, holding out both her hands to the flame, which leaped and danced among the logs on the open hearth.

"Oh, I told Luiz the other day that I knew where he got his talent for compliments. And then they accuse us Irish of

blarney! If we have the defect, it must have been our first ancestors who brought it with them when they sailed from Lisbon north into the unknown seas. You see I have profited by the lessons of history Luiz recommended to me."

His mother smiled wisely, while Mollie rubbed her cold hands vigorously.

"Oh, I understand now," she said, "why Miss Hamer, Miss Smith, and the others sigh for England in the winter, and grumble at the cold here. In many of the houses one really does feel it keenly, but the least little bit of fire is enough to make it quite warm enough most days. Oh, how lovely!"

The exclamation referred to a big bunch of lilies of the valley, loosely arranged in a silver vase on the table, of which Mollie had caught sight as she turned away from the fire. "Do these grow here, too?"

"No, they come from Lisbon. Luiz sent them this morning. But the perfume is a little strong for me. I thought perhaps you would take them when you go."

"Would it not be robbing you?" said

Mollie, flushing with pleasure. "Are you sure that Luiz will not mind?"

"Quite sure," said his mother, with another smile. "What do you think?"

But if Mollie heard the question, she apparently considered it one of those which need no answer, for she made none, only busied herself taking off her fur cap, and then, having drawn out of her bag a bit of embroidery, came and sat down on her usual low chair beside the couch.

For a while they talked of the coming wedding, Mollie giving details of the various marvels of delicate stitchery in progress in different convents and the pieces of work, cushions and the like for the new house, undertaken by Soledade and herself.

"But I can only do easy and simple things," said she. "Beside Soledade's, my fingers are all thumbs."

Donna Guiomar smiled, taking the graceful, girlish hand in her own and stroking it slowly.

"Yes, Soledade is clever," she said, "and not only with her needle. She has read and thought a good deal, and she is a thor-

oughly nice girl. I am very fond of Soledade."

"So am I," said Mollie, heartily, "and of Mafalda, too. I do hope she will be happy."

"Oh, I think so. Vasco is a good boy, and very much in love with her. I feel sure that Mafalda will be happy."

There was a silence between them, heavy with thought, and then Donna Guiomar spoke with a little sigh.

"After all, what is happiness? It is all a question of degree. Some want joy and prosperity, love and comfort, and never a crumpled roseleaf in it all. While for others just mere freedom from pain would be happiness. And yet perhaps not exactly. One grows not only to carry one's cross, but to hug it. Suffering becomes in time the mine of gold which one can coin into blessings for those one loves."

Mollie looked up, her blue eyes wet with sympathy.

"When one is patient and brave—but the lesson must be horribly hard to learn."

"Without a Master it would be impos-

sible," said Donna Guiomar, and for a moment closed her eyes. In the clear cold afternoon light every line and furrow on the pale face could be read with painful distinctness, and the girl's heart swelled with pity. The sick lady, lifting her tired lids, caught her look of honest sympathy and drew her closer.

"There are compensations," she said. "If I had not been a helpless clog on him for these ten years past, I should never have learned so well what my son's heart was like. Can you believe it, Mollie? You may have heard something of what people say, and Luiz knows little more than they. For all he could tell, it might be true at least in part, that my illness was merely a thing of the nerves, a thing I could have conquered, at any rate in the beginning. No, he knows nothing, for I am glad to say I have been able to hide the worst of the pain from him, and the doctor, who alone knows, has kept my secret faithfully. But never in all these years, by word or look, has he betrayed anything with regard to my illness but the purest love and

pity—nay, more than that, no thought that was not of the purest love and pity has entered his mind. Is not that worth some suffering, worth even the death by inches which is my fate?"

Mollie nodded. She could not trust her voice to speak, but the sick lady read her face like a book.

"And you?" she went on. "Oh, that day you came here first, I watched you anxiously. I knew what they would hint—even my dearest friends, even Soledade, perhaps. No, she would say nothing, but I have read it sometimes in her eyes. Pity indeed, but a little incredulity, a little scorn, almost, for one who could make so small an effort to conquer her weakness and save her son's life from being wasted. But when you came back from your talk with Mafalda, over there on the veranda, to bid me good-by, Mollie, and there was nothing in those blue eyes of yours but the purest sympathy, then I knew that Luiz had not been too lavish in his praise when he said that you were your father's daughter unalloyed."

She ended with a smile, a much-meaning

smile, which brought the blood to Mollie's cheek and again there was silence between them, till Donna Guiomar began again, speaking very softly, while Mollie, crouching beside her couch, her face half-hidden against the embroidered Chinese silk coverlet, listened like one in a happy, bewildered dream.

"It had always been a hope of mine," she said, "from the days when my sturdy boy used to leave his books and his dogs to play at baby games with Diogo's little daughter—a trio of children together, Diogo, Luiz, and little Mollie—such a laughing, merry baby as you were, Mollie, and such a little tyrant, though never too imperious for your willing slaves! Oh, those were golden days, only too short. Death came, suddenly, unexpectedly, to your father, and to me this illness. They told me it might be years before the end came—and it has been years, and though it is nearer, much nearer, it may still be years. How could I ever hope to realize my dream? And how could I prevail upon my son even to try and realize his? For

you see, Mollie, the years had set up barriers where there had been none. You had become all that remained to two families, and an heiress besides. Do you know that I trembled when Donna Guilhermina gave me news of your coming? I have grown something of a coward at the thought of new suffering. It is hard to be an obstacle, always and always, Mollie, in the path of those you love. But when, on the night of your arrival, Luiz, my grave, quiet Luiz, excited and happy as I have not seen him for years, brought me the news of the day's doings, I breathed again. Another grandchild to share the duties and the fortune! It was a solution I had never dreamed of. And then, when I saw you, the little Mollie of old days, grown into just such a girl as I had often pictured, with your mother's pretty ways, your father's heart of gold—Do not blush, child. It is not only fortunes we leave our children; brave, noble hearts and lives well-lived make an inheritance far better worth having. Well, when I saw you, then I, too, poor wreck that I am, I began to dream of happiness."

She ended and closed her eyes again. But Mollie, as if in answer to her unspoken thought, lifted her head and pressed her fresh young lips, first to the thin white fingers, and then, with the lightest pressure, against the withered cheek. And Donna Guiomar, her eyes full of tears, returned the silent avowal of a mother's right thus expressed, by a long kiss on the smooth white forehead. Then all at once her grasp tightened on Mollie's hand. There was a step on the stairs, an unexpected step, since Luiz was in Lisbon.

But it was Luiz who stood on the threshold. The long, level rays of the setting sun, shining full into his face, dazzled him for a moment as he entered the room, so that he was beside his mother's couch before he saw that she was not alone. Then the joy which already shone in his eyes transfigured the whole grave face.

"Mother!" he exclaimed, bending over her hand, and repeating the graceful greeting which is an ancient custom of the country. "I got back sooner than I hoped. I was able to finish yesterday evening, and

catch the early train this morning. And, little cousin—it is good to have you both together."

"Yes, it is good," said his mother, "so good that for my part, I only wish you would waste no more time in asking Mollie to stay with us always."

"Oh!" said Mollie, getting to her feet. She had not expected such a sudden attack. But Donna Guiomar had again closed her eyes and turned her head away. Luiz stepped forward, his whole face alight with joyous eagerness.

"Oh, Mollie," he said, stretching out both his hands, "Mollie!"

No words could have been more eloquent. The girl looked at him as he stood, transfigured in the golden sunset light. That would pass in a moment and the gray twilight follow, but she knew in her inmost heart as she held out her own hands to take his that there was that between them which would never pass, a flame of love burning in the inmost being of each, which time would only feed and eternity consecrate.

CHAPTER XXI

JUSTICE

THE golden light of the same sunset, which had shone an hour before on Mollie's betrothal, had not yet fully faded from the western sky, when Guida stood watching the vanishing procession of torchbearers who had accompanied the Viaticum from the parish church to the *Quinta das Heras.* Young and old had left their work at the sound of the bell summoning them to the pious task, and with a few soldiers to make up the necessary number, clad every one in the deep rose silk capes which were now fluttering in the evening breeze between the palm-trees, had formed round the canopy under which the priest in veil and cope bore the Blessed Sacrament.

The smell of the hot wax still lingered in the room behind her, where Cacilda was putting out the lights, and removing the

altar-cloth. Her grandmother lay very white and weary, but apparently no weaker than at the doctor's visit that morning. It had been her own wish to receive the Last Sacraments, a wish expressed on rousing herself from the long sleep or stupor into which she had fallen after the visit of John Martyn. Now she was resting again, sleeping, or perhaps unconscious. Would she pass from that sleep to death, Guida wondered, without another word of affection, or farewell? And would there never be another chance of confessing? It would make no difference now. No agitation could harm the nearly worn out heart, whose few last beats on earth were already numbered.

The last rose-colored cape disappeared beyond the wall, the last lights vanished at the turn of the road, the bell sounded fainter and fainter and then died into silence. Guida turned away, back into the sick-room, and sat in her old place beside the bed, waiting. On the other side, Cacilda was saying her rosary, the low murmur of her voice punctuated with stifled

sobs. It was very quiet in the big, dimly-lit room, and, but for that persistent odor of hot wax, no different from any other of the many evenings when they had sat thus, Cacilda and she, watching by the sick lady. Was it not one of those other evenings and the events of the day merely an evil dream, thought Guida; was she not dreaming now, and would she not wake to hear her grandmother saying:

"Margarida, dearest, it is time for you to go to rest. You must be tired of sitting here so long."

So real had the fancy become as the quiet minutes passed, that her grandmother's voice speaking at last, hardly recalled her to a sense of the reality..

"Margarida, dearest," she said faintly, stretching out a hand to seek her own. Guida slipped to her knees so that their faces were on a level.

"You have been a good child," whispered the weak voice, "a good child like your father."

The words brought back with a rush all the bitter reality of things. With a stifled

sob Guida pressed her lips to the hand she held. It moved gently and the sick lady gave a little sigh, a quiet sigh which died softly into silence. Cacilda's murmured prayer had ceased. Then, with an effort, Guida spoke at last.

"No, I have not been good," she said, her cheek against the limp hand. "Can you forgive me, grandmother? I have deceived you. I am Alvaro's daughter, not Diogo's, as you think."

There was a gasp in the silence, but it was Cacilda who gave it, and then held her breath. It seemed to Guida as if the whole world was holding its breath, so dead was the silence and so long.

"Oh, *meu Deus, meu Deus!*" whispered Cacilda, at last, fumbling with fingers that shook, for a light. She raised it above the bed, letting its rays fall upon the still figure.

"*Ai,* Senhor . . . Lord of my soul!" she cried, and Guida lifted her head.

"What is it, what has happened, Cacilda?" she asked trembling, though even as she asked, she knew. She gave one long



"'Can you forgive me, Grandmother? I have deceived you.'" —*Page 270.*

look at the white still face on the pillow; then all the world darkened around her and with a sob of utter desolation, she slipped together into an unconscious heap on the floor.

* * * * *

She awoke in her own room. She was lying on her bed, fully dressed still, though some one had opened her dress at the neck, and her hair was damp around her forehead. A candle flickered on the table beside her, and by its light she saw that she was alone, alone with her weakness as she must be henceforth with her sorrow.

She was drifting back again to the stupor from which she had awakened when the door opened and Cacilda entered. The light in her hand showed her wrinkled old face wet with tears and the unusually stern set of the good-natured mouth. She stood at the foot of the bed looking at the girl in silence for a moment, then she spoke.

"She did not hear you," she said. "She was dead already, thank God for that."

Guida did not answer, and after a moment the old woman continued, speaking

with a certain stern rudeness which quite ignored the old relations of mistress and maid.

"But it was true, what you said? You would not tell a lie then?"

"Yes, it is true," said Guida.

"Who was your mother, where do you come from, how did you come?"

Too broken to resist, the girl related the story of her life and the incidents of that morning which now seemed so infinitely far away.

"And she never guessed, my mistress. Nothing told her that she was being deceived, robbed—yes, robbed, she and the child she loved."

For Guida had made a dumb motion of protest.

"Was it not enough that your father took *her* father's life, that you must take her fortune, too?"

"Oh!" Guida stretched out her hands with an imploring gesture, but the old woman went on relentlessly.

"Yes! I swore to my mistress that the little one should never know from me and

I have kept my word. But I said nothing about Alvaro's daughter. Who thought of Alvaro's daughter, when the murderer crept away in the dawn, helped and sheltered because of his brother's prayer and the honor of the name, but an outcast forever? *She* must never know, unless indeed, after her father and her money, you wish to steal her peace of mind."

"Oh!" cried Guida. "Can it give you pleasure to torture me? Mollie would be more merciful."

The old woman's face changed, softened for a moment, then stiffened again.

"Not if, instead of being the daughter who lost him when she was too young to feel her loss, she had been the one to nurse him, to rear him, the one who loved him best on earth, yes, better than his own mother—whose care and thought were all for the worthless elder, till he broke her heart. Then she let my Diogo in. But I had him first, and I never lost him, not even when mother and wife and child all had their share—he was mine still."

"And my father killed him?"

It seemed like a nightmare. Never had she thought, in all the dreary speculations of the last hours, of anything like this.

"Yes, your father killed him. He came to Freamunde, slinking like a thief in the night, beggared again with his gambling and his wild life, to see what more he could wring from those whom he had all but ruined already. It had been Senhor Diogo's care and hard work alone which had saved the old place then, and since, the Senhora's chief interest in life was to build again a bright future for his child. No one knew that Alvaro had returned to the country. He had promised again, as he had promised before, to leave it for good, and try at least to begin a new life in some new land. But he broke that promise like all the rest. Slinking through the village like a thief, muffled up in this thick *varino,* but almost in rags underneath, he overheard one farmer say to another in a wineshop that he had that day paid his dues up at the *quinta,* he and several more, so that there must be a good sum of money in the house. Alvaro said later that he meant to

ask for it; he swore it even, but who knows? Perhaps he did. At any rate, when he reached the house, he found the door still open on to the terrace. Senhor Diogo, God rest his soul, liked to come out of an evening for half an hour, or it might be an hour even, under the stars, to smoke his cigar and walk up and down, up and down, as if it were on his quarter-deck. Perhaps he fancied it was. We used to call it the master's watch. He was on the terrace, then, when Alvaro slunk up. But he had stopped at the end furthest from the door to look at something. I have thought it must have been the lighted window of the nursery, but I shall never be sure. And while his back was turned the other slipped in. Surely he meant to steal, else why did he not walk up openly? Senhor Diogo was not one to turn him away. When he finished his cigar and came in, bolting the door as usual behind him, he noticed the light in the study and thought that he had forgotten to put it out. At the moment, the Senhora Donna Moira called to him from the stairs.

'Is that you, Diogo? I thought I heard you come in just now.'

"'Yes, it is I, carissima,' he called back, and turned into the study to put out the light. There he saw the desk open and a dark figure bending over it. At the same instant the light was blown out, and the man flung himself toward the door. Senhor Diogo caught him in his arms and there was a grim struggle in the dark.

"'Let me go,' panted the man, 'let me go, or it will be the worse for you.' But Senhor Diogo held fast. He never guessed who it was, or he might have let go, but even the voice was changed with the life he had led, and the cloak was of coarse, rough stuff such as his brother had never worn. The man struggled and twisted till all at once Diogo let go. There was a sharp pain in his breast and his hand was wet.

"'I told you to let me go,' said the other hoarsely, and this time he knew him.

"'Alvaro, it is you,' he said. 'I think you have killed me.'"

"But he did not know it was his brother," said Guida. She was sitting up

on the bed, her white face bent eagerly toward the speaker, who told the dreadful story like one who has long thought and pondered over its every phase.

"He said he did not," rejoined she. "Perhaps it was true—but he could have heard him speak outside."

"He said he did not."

"Yes. When we came a moment later with lights, he was kneeling beside him, holding up his head. There were only we three, Donna Guilhermina, Donna Moira, and I. Luckily the other servants had been sent to bed. He helped to carry his brother to his room. The old doctor was a friend. When he saw the wound they told him the story, of course, but it went no farther. He promised to keep silence. Senhor Alvaro left the house with him secretly, stayed two days in his house, and then, on the night of the funeral—Diogo died toward evening on the day following the attack, he left the country. No one knew. No one knows now. The doctor is dead. They are all dead but I—all of them, God have their souls."

"But he did not *know* it was his brother." There was a grain of consolation in the thought. Touched, perhaps, by the forlornness of her whole attitude, Cacilda added:

"Senhor Diogo believed him. He forgave him, he had a heart of gold. I could not—not for long. It came between me and God. But she whom God has taken had a struggle, too, a long struggle. And because he had forfeited all part and right in his name and his family, in his country even, because all he could do was to slink away and be heard of no more, that is why Donna Guilhermina, God keep her, once she knew he had a daughter, determined to use the means she could for justice to be done. Yes, it was justice, because he had spent and wasted more than his part, far more, already. It was justice, but it was not like Diogo's daughter to be so thoughtful about money and so eager for her rights."

"But I do not understand," said Guida. "I told my grandmother about her eldest son's having a daughter because, later, I

hoped to tell her the rest. How could I guess from the outset what there was to keep her forever out of any lot or part in the family she thought her own? When Donna Guilhermina spoke of an inheritance, it gave me the opportunity to mention her. Anything else might have done as well. It is true she took it as an act of generosity, and gave me words of praise which were part of my punishment."

The old woman laughed contemptuously.

"She gave you more," she said, "which will be the rest of it, perhaps. She sent for the notary to draw up a deed of gift, by which Freamunde and all the other property, except a small part, was made over unconditionally and at once to you. Oh, you have managed your business well."

"To me?" said Guida, bewildered, and then it was her turn to laugh, a loud, bitter laugh which rang out strangely in the silence of the house of death. She had indeed managed well, and she was reaping her reward.

Cacilda looked at her, slightly alarmed.

"Oh, do you not see?" she said. "Justice

has been done. Had I said nothing, had I bided my time, and thought only of my pupils and my teaching, I should now be co-heiress with Mollie of Freamunde and the rest. Oh, justice has indeed been done! Think a moment. The deed of gift makes over everything, unconditionally, to Maria Margarida Alvarenga, which might be me as it is Mollie. But surely, surely, Donna Guilhermina did not forget to add: 'daughter of my beloved son, Diogo.' "

Cacilda stared at her a moment, then clasped her hands joyfully.

"True, true," she said. "Of course that is how she put it. I remember hearing the notary ask how to spell Moira. True—and so Diogo's daughter has her father's share, after all."

"And Alvaro's daughter has his," said Guida, wearily. "Justice has been done."

CHAPTER XXII

GUIDA'S SHARE

ALEGRIA scribbled the last words of her exercise with small regard for orthography, gave a great sigh of relief, and shut up the copybook, entirely forgetting to blot the page.

"Donna Miquelina will give you a bad note for that to-morrow," remarked Nuno, who was busy at the other end of the table coloring a drawing of his own execution.

"Oh, well, to-morrow is some way off," said Alegria philosophically, "besides, I'll only show it to her at the end of the lesson, when she has to hurry away to catch her train. Come along, Nuno. I am going to play now in the garden."

The three girls were sitting at their work in the room which had been their schoolroom, and was now their own special domain. A big pleasant place, simply but prettily furnished, with a good many spec-

imens of their own handiwork in various directions.

Mollie put down her embroidery to look for the fiftieth time in the last hour at the clock. Mafalda noticed the action and laughed merrily.

"You will not make it go any quicker however often you look," she said. "He can not be here before four."

Mollie blushed and then laughed, too. Her black morning dress made her look taller and older, but for the rest only served to throw up her delicate coloring and the liquid blueness of her eyes, more full than ever of light and expression.

"Some hours are twice the usual length," she said apologetically, as Soledade went out.

They worked on in silence for a few minutes, then Nuno looked up.

"Oh, Mafaldinha, do tell me. Are you sure I have painted this lady's dress the right fashionable shade? She is a little like you."

"Thanks," said Mafalda, laughing as she contemplated the weird production which

Nuno showed her in all seriousness. "Now, it is time to put away your paints. Your master will be here in about five minutes. What are you doing in that drawer?"

"Only putting my painting away with yours. I do not want it to get spoiled," returned Nuno, who had a high idea of the value of his artistic efforts. Then he, too, went out, but returned after a moment.

"I say, there is a cab outside—a visit, I suppose."

"It is too early for either Vasco or Luiz," said Mafalda. "Cypriano knows that mamma is not at home."

But a moment later Cypriano opened the door.

"A visit for the Senhora Donna Margarida," he announced, standing aside to give place to a slim, black-clad figure at whom both girls stared for a moment in astonishment. Then Mollie dropped her work and advanced with outstretched hands.

"Guida," she said. "Oh, my poor Guida, how ill you look!"

"I have been ill," said Guida quietly.

"For a few days I was very ill. But I am better now. I have come to say good-by." She had not taken Mollie's hand.

"Good-by, but where are you going? Do sit down. Mafalda, this is—"

But Mafalda, with a slight inclination to the newcomer, had withdrawn quietly through the nearest window.

"I am going back to America," said Guida.

"To America?" said Mollie, her eyes wide with astonishment. "But I thought, you told me—John Martyn?"

"John Martyn has no longer anything to say in my affairs," said Guida. Her voice was controlled, but she could not quite restrain the nervous quiver of her lips as she said the name.

"He is not—not worse?" asked Mollie, puzzled and dismayed.

"No, he is out of danger and not likely to have a relapse in the new life he has adopted. He has gone as ship's doctor on one of those sailing-ships which ply between Glasgow and New Zealand. He had the offer from a friend the very day before

he left England for Madeira, but said nothing about it so as not to undeceive me when I fondly hoped I was saving his life. The ship had just put into Funchal on the day our grandmother died, and he left in it next morning. Dr. Sartorius brought me the news."

"But, but—" said Mollie, then stopped, afraid of being indiscreet. Her eyes spoke for her, but Guida disregarded their language. There was a moment's awkward silence, then Mollie started joyfully. "That is Luiz's step," she said, her whole face lighting up, "Guida, our cousin Luiz Noronha, to whom I am engaged. Luiz, I am here."

He entered by one of the windows as she spoke, and she hastened toward him with hands outstretched and looks that would have been eloquent of welcome even had her smiling lips been silent. "How late you are to-day," she said, as he took the hands in both his. "Luiz, this is Guida."

The young man looked from one face to the other so like and yet so different, the one as delicately tinted as a petal of apple-

blossom, with fresh young lips, untouched by more than a child's sorrow, and eyes whose blue radiance only a passing rain of tears had dimmed; the other, so like in form and yet so different in its pallor, with the lines of pain around the mouth, and the look of hopeless suffering in the weary eyes.

"Luiz," said Mollie, reading the pity in his face, "Guida talks of going to America. Explain to her what we settled when we got the notary's letter and the documents a fortnight ago. It is not fair that I should have all and she nothing."

"Yes, it is fair," said Guida.

But Mollie would not heed her.

"As we can not leave Oporto for long on account of Donna Guiomar," said Mollie, "and because of what you told me about the health of Dr. Martyn, we had thought of giving you for your share the Funchal property—"

But Guida put out a restraining hand. She felt her self-command giving way. How could she bear any longer to witness a happiness which might have been hers, to

listen to plans which would have proved feasible?

"You are too kind," she said, "far too kind, and believe me, I am and shall always be sincerely grateful. But it can not be. There is no question of injustice. Those who know will tell you that my father had more than his share of the Alvarenga property during his lifetime."

But Mollie was unconvinced.

"It is not fair," she said. "You ought to have your proper share."

"That will be my share, work and reparation—for myself and for others. Yours will be, I hope, happiness, prosperity, every joy. And now let me go—"

"But you must at least tell us where, and promise to write—"

Guida interrupted her. "It is better not. Let me pass out of your life as I entered it. My only consolation is that whatever harm I did, I am the only sufferer. To you I brought no sorrow—"

"Oh, no," said Mollie. "To me you gave my chance of happiness."

"May you keep it long," she said, and

then bowing to them both as they stood with hand still clasped in hand at the further side of the table, turned and passed from the room.

Mollie started to follow her, but Luiz held her back. Vague rumors he had heard at the time of his friend's death recurred to his mind. No ordinary grief, not even the pain of her broken engagement, he felt sure, had written those characters on a face so young, and no ordinary motives dictated a resolution so extreme.

"Let her go, Mollie dearest," he said "We can see that the small part she spoke of is made as large as possible, and for the rest—it is not she who is cutting herself off from home and family. Her father did that for her long ago."

* * * * *

Guida crossed the hall without meeting any one, but as she closed the door behind her, Soledade came up the garden-path.

"You are leaving us?" she said. "Will you not wait to see mamma?"

"No, I must go," said Guida.

The words were simple, but the other

girl seemed to guess the meaning that underlay them. She put a hand on her arm.

"But so quickly, cousin!"

Guida looked at her more attentively.

"You are Mafalda or Soledade?" she asked.

"I am Soledade."

"They should have given me the name."

"It suits me well enough," said the girl. "There are many kinds of solitude."

"And I shall taste them all. *A Deus,* Soledade."

"No, no, not like that, with only the memory of others' happiness to make your own pain worse. Oh, I know what it is, I who speak to you, Cousin Guida. You are going because you must, but we should have been friends, we two."

Guida looked down into the honest brown eyes and read there an understanding sympathy which she had not found in Mollie's blue and happy ones. Her lips quivered and she turned her face away.

"Yes, we might have been friends," she said.

"Well, we can still be friends. What does distance matter? When you go into exile will it not be a little consolation to feel that you have one link with the country which is still your own, one who remembers you in the home where you might be but for faults which are not yours? Guida, you must write and I will answer. I will give you news of home, and you will tell me how you do, and whether work can really cure pain. Promise."

"Yes, I promise," said Guida, "and I thank you from my heart."

And with that little word of friendship as the one thing sweet in all the bitter inheritance she had come so far to seek, Guida passed out of the sight of her kinsfolk and out of their happy, prosperous lives.

THE END

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